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Places	Valencia, Spain
Dates	10-13 March 2015
Participants	Sabina Bokal
Issue: <i>International Conference on DROUGHT: Research and Science-Policy Interfacing</i>	
<p>Purpose of the trip</p> <p>The International Conference on Drought Research and Science-Policy Interfacing was the final event of the EC-funded project DROUGHT-R&SPI. Main aim of the event was to discuss drought related research and the advances on response policies in order to foster the development of Drought Policies and Plans to reduce risk and vulnerability, and to enhance preparedness and resiliency. Focus of the conference was also on presenting results of the DROUGHT-R&SPI project and other interesting presentations that deal with the three drought aspects: identification, assessment and policies.</p> <p>IDMP CEE participation</p> <p>IDMP CEE Programme Manager was invited to the event by Mr Van Lannen who is a coordinator of the above mentioned project and also member of the IDMP CEE Peer Review Group. IDMP CEE was presented in a poster session as part of the poster <i>Drought vulnerability assessment for different hydrological conditions based on Standardized Runoff Index and flow duration curve in Lithuania</i>, which was submitted by one of the IDMP CEE partner, Vilnius University. Poster can be found here.</p> <p>Program of the conference</p> <p>Conference was divided into several sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drought as a natural hazard and its impacts; • drought identification and characterization; • drought indicators, monitoring and forecasting; • early warning systems; • drought risk and vulnerability; • drought policies, water management and governance. <p>Part of the conference was also final (4th) Pan European Drought Dialogue Forum (<i>BTORs from the 2nd and the 3rd</i>). Where it was emphasized that Science-policy interfacing “works” on local level or maybe somewhere also on regional (example of Jucar river basin) but it does not work the way we would like on higher level. Policy level usually needs quick, short and concise information. It is also more efficient if there is a higher risk of drought (or drought already occurred) and if these meetings, workshops are focused (for example on thresholds, etc.).</p> <p>There was also a special World Bank Panel which started with presentation of their activities within drought management and climate change. Their series of publication <i>Turn down the heat</i> are focusing on the risks of climate change to development in different parts of the world. They are publishing new scientific analysis which examines the likely impacts of present day (0.8°C), 2°C and 4°C warming above pre-industrial temperatures on agricultural production, water resources, ecosystem services, and coastal vulnerability for affected populations. The World Bank is also big external source of financing for water and Disaster Risk Management projects. They presented Water Partnership Program and Climate Change knowledge portal.</p> <p>GEF presented very similar project to IDMP called Flood and Drought Management tools in West and East Africa. According to latest information, there are some plans to cooperate with IDMP.</p> <p>Last day of the conference was a field trip to Júcar-Turia River Basin which is one of the best examples how River Basin Management Plan should work in practice.</p>	

Main conclusions/thoughts:

- All EU countries need to follow WFD, Blueprint, etc. but this “jacket does not fit to all” so each country has to discover for themselves how certain policies can be implemented.
- Drought is not anymore so high on EU agenda on EU as it was 4 years ago (or with the last big drought in 2012).
- Drought-R&SPI project was the first project which included “science-policy” interfacing.
- There are good monitoring tools already developed, also know drought impacts are well known and collected. Problem is a missing link between these two - what does certain indicator (monitoring) really mean in term of the impacts?
- Many different projects and programmes dealing with drought management, monitoring, etc. already exist, their results are available online. It is important that review of what have already been done is the first step when starting a new “drought related” project.
- Policy level usually wants one clear short message and researchers have a difficult job to do this; media have important role here as well.
- WFD clearly states that Drought Management Plan should be included into RBMP. 2nd cycle will finish now in 2015 and if in the next cycle (in 6 years) relevant countries still will not have DMP within RBMP then “*our mission has fell*”, said Henny Van Lannen at the end of the conference.
- Risk can also be taken as an opportunity; for example, if there is higher risk of drought it is easier to communicate the problem and solutions to the policy level.
- Drought related projects have to include all stakeholders, especially people on the ground (farmers, private sector, communities, etc.) because they are the ones who have to deal with the risks.

There was no special “follow-up” defined after the conference while IDMP CEE participation there was just to collect information what kind of drought related projects and programs on European level exist, which results and outputs can be used also in our region and to present IDMP CEE to others to try to find some link for future collaboration.



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