**MINUTES OF THE 29TH MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL WORKING GROUP (ERWG)**

5 November 2023, 09:30-11:00 hours (Session-I)
5 November 2023, 11:30-13:00 hours (Session-II)
Visakhapatnam (Vizag), Andhra Pradesh State India

Presented by the Chairman

**Mandate:** The mission of ERWG is to promote awareness about critical ICID relevant water issues at all levels in Europe and to pay special attention to the environmentally sustainable water management in Europe.

**Members Present:** (1) VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri (Chair), (2) VPH Dr. Irena Bondarik (Russia), (3) PH Dr. Prof. Bart Shultz (The Netherlands), (4) Dr. Sami Bourfa represented by VP Dr. Bruno Grawitz (France), (5) PH Dr. Peter Lee (UK) and (6) President Ragab Ragab (UK).

**Observers:** (i) Dr. Celine Papin (France); (ii) VPH Dr. Ian W. Makin; and (iii) VPH Dr. Mohamed Wahba (Egypt).

**Website:** [http://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/106](http://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/106)

**ERWG Minutes Item 1:** Action Taken Report by Chair

1. VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri (Italy), Chair of the ERWG presented a report on the actions taken on the decisions and proposals of the European Regional at its 29th meeting held on 5 November 2023 at Vizag., India.

2. ERWG Chair VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri (Italy) informed that the First Virtual meeting of the group has been organized on August 18th, 2023, wherein eighteen members/representatives participated. During the virtual meeting, Chair Marco Arcieri discussed various activities like strengthening the membership in Europe, how to organize the Road Map to ICID Vision 2030, organizing seminars, workshops, sessions especially related to the agricultural water management in Europe, updated on the activities of the Task force on Legislative Framework on agricultural drought mitigation (TF-DMD) and on the various Focus Groups. Further on, he introduced to the discussion about the need to update the webpage of ERWG, and expressed the wish that more webinar and web-based seminar can be organized. The online minutes of the ERWG have been circulated to the members of the RWG for their information. The minutes of the virtual meeting of all technical working groups have been uploaded on a dedicated webpage (ICID Workbodies Virtual Meeting) at [https://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/152](https://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/152)

3. The Chair informed that there has been a new nomination received for the membership of the ERWG, in the person of Engr. Anu Nemvalts from Estonia. ERWG recommended the nomination of Engr. Anu Nemvalts (Estonia) for the membership of the group, which has been accepted subject to her presence or else provisional member. Chair also informed that the Hungarian National Committee is also well on its way towards a new constitution, given interactions taken by Chair VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri and several members of the Hungarian country.

**ERWG Minutes Item 1.1:** Strengthening the membership in Europe

4. In order to strengthen the membership in the European countries, RWG discussed the challenge of strengthening the membership of ICID within Europe with the member countries/representatives in Europe during the meetings held in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Further, ERWG Chair informed that in order to further deepen fruitful relationships with Caucasus regions, he has participated as an invited speaker to an International Conference organized by Georgia National Committee on “Debris Flow Control”. The Conference has been held in Tbilisi in the historical building of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, and attended by delegates of Georgia, Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri made a presentation sharing experiences of Southern Italy and informed that a meeting with these Countries will be possibly organized there very soon by him, so as to consolidate relationships and attract other Countries of the region to enter ICID. On this specific issue, VPH Irena Bondarik (Russia) has recalled her activity in terms of relationships and contacts and her long time working, bringing Georgia National Committee into ICID. She has also offered to give further assistance and help in order to allow other countries to join ICID, such as Byelorussia. Also, taking advantage of the presence of VPH Dr. Mohamed Wahba, Chair has reminded about the importance to connect with African Regional Working Group (AFRWG) in order to support activities of NCS in Africa and involving them in ICID activities.

**ERWG Minutes Item 1.2:** Reactivation of National Committees (NCs) in Europe

5. In order to reactivate the NCs in Europe, Chairman thanked ICID Central Office for the reiterated efforts carried out to reactivate various NCs of Europe and informed the members that he has been glad to offer useful information in order to promote the reactivation of the Hungary National Committee, after the sad loss of the former Chair Sandor Szalai. A new NC, with a new Chair has now been established and Dr. Marco Arcieri informed to the WG that he will be able to organize soon a meeting with the new Hungary NC members, in order to plan for future activities. Also, he informed that
along with the efforts of Dr. Klaus Rottcher (Germany), ICID Direct Member, to contact the Ministry of Agriculture for reactivation of German National Committee (GENCID), he has had a very fruitful contact here in Vizag with Ms. Laura Sustersic of German Cooperation Agency GIZ, who offered to collaborate and offer her contacts on achieving this important objective. He further informed Members about the initiative to hold a joint meeting with most important European Cooperation Agencies, such as the French, Italian, German and Spanish, to seek for future possible collaborations with ICID. President Honoraire Dr. Peter Lee (UK) informed the WG about the difficult financial situation that UK National Committee is facing, due to the progressive retirement of several members and the situation is such that the UK NC might have resources enough to run for another year only. Discussion was subsequently held on the possibility for UK NC to join ICID under direct membership, as also considered by VPH Ian Makin. President Honoraire Prof. Dr. Bart Schultz (The Netherlands) also informed that after the abrupt withdrawal of the Dutch NC from ICID, he is currently carrying out some efforts to revitalize the same. He will update on the subject. Further on, Chair has also informed RWG about the very fruitful meeting he had in Ubeda, Spain in October 2023, where he accepted the invitation of AERYD (Spanish Association of Irrigation and Drainage) to participate to their National Congress. He there had a very fruitful discussion with Director General of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Rural Development Department, Dr. Cristina Clemente Martinez, who ensured VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri about the possibility of Spain to be again more and more an active member of ICID, also by eventually participating to next IECs. Membership status is given in Annex 3, page 31.

ERWG Minutes Item 2: Road Map to ICID Vision 2030 – Status of Activities relevant to European Region

6. The ERWG discussed the Action Plan (Road Map to ICID Vision 2030) with no further updates to PCSO for inclusion.

ERWG Minutes Item 3: Seminar/Session related to Agricultural Water Management in Europe

7. The French National Committee of ICID (AFEID) communicated that within the Framework of the Scientific and Technical Committee on Agricultural Water (COSTEA), they have organised an International Seminar from 21-25 November 2022 at Montpellier, France. The AFEID also organized a workshop on Salon International de Agriculture in 2023 at Paris, France. AFEID representative informed that the Workshop was very well attended and gained a lot of interest.

8. Chair Dr Marco informed about his participation to the 39th Spanish National Congress of Irrigation, organized by Spanish Irrigation and Drainage Association (AERYD) where he gave a presentation on “Drought Prediction in the Mediterranean area”, which gained a great interest. The Congress was held in Ubeda, Spain from 18th to 21st of October and has been very well attended. Dr. Florence Malherbe of AFEID and two representatives of Georgian NC of ICID also joined the Congress. Most importantly, Chair Dr. Marco Arcieri has had a very fruitful discussion with Dr. Cristina Clemente Martinez, Deputy General Director of the Irrigation and Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture of Spain, who expressed the firm intention for Spanish National Committee to further collaborate and play a much more active role within ICID in the future.

9. Subsequently, VP Bruno Grawitz (France) informed that the Seminar on the Mediterranean region and Europe, with an emphasis on wastewater reuse in a global context of drought will be held in November 2024 at Montpellier, France. Further updates will be shared by AFEID to the members of the RWG in due course of time.

ERWG Minutes Item 4: Links with regional and trans-national organizations for co-operation

10. Chair Dr. Marco Arcieri briefed the members of the group about the possibility to establish a cooperation with CIHEAM at Paris, in order to develop activities of capacity building and training for YPs. Furthermore, Dr. Marco informed that a possible MoU between IDA (International Desalination Association, based in Rome) and ICID might be soon finalised for the sharing of information regarding new technologies on sea water desalination, a major topic to be further investigated in the future and strategic for ICID. Chair Dr Marco further informed that he has been invited by IDA in Seville, Spain, to participate in the 50th World Congress of IDA; where he gave a presentation on “Possible use of desalinated sea water for irrigation: trends and perspectives”. The presentation was well received and gained a lot of interest by the audience.

ERWG Minutes Item 5: Activities of Focus Groups of ERWG

11. RWG decided to have following five Focus groups based on their relevance to Europe such as - (a) Focus Group on History (WG-HIST) led by VPH Laszlo Hayde (Hungary); (b) Focus Group on Environment (WG-ENV) led by Mrs. Seija Virtanen (Finland); (c) Focus Group on Sustainable Drainage (WG-SDRG) led by Dr. Irene Bondarik (Russia); (d) Focus Group on Water Related Risks led by Prof. Klaus Roettcher (Germany) & Mr. Olli-Matti Verta (Finland) and (e) Focus Group on Irrigation and Drainage in the States under Socio-economic Transformation (WG-IDSSST) led by VPH Peter Kovalenko (Ukraine). These Groups were set up to raise the issues related to European viewpoint in the respective workbodies of ICID and revert back to ERWG on the relevant issues within the scope of focus groups. However, there were no further updates on this topic.

ERWG Minutes Item 6: Task Force on Legislative Framework on Agricultural Drought Mitigation for European Regional (TF-DMD) - Updates

12. VPH Dr. Marco Arcieri briefed the members about the results of his studies and research conducted on Drought Prediction. Further, Dr. Marco informed that results of his research activities have been submitted for publication in the
Journal ‘Irrigation and & Drainage’ in the revised short form of a scientific paper titled “Drought Awareness in Southern Italy based on ENSO Observation” and the full version of the paper (about 150 pages) would be produced as an output of ERWG. VPH Dr. Marco shared the progress on drought prediction and informed the members that the final version of the scientific work might be also produced as an output of the WG on Drought Preparedness of FAO WASAG.

ERWG Minutes Item 7: Proposed workshop of the Working Group

13. Chair Dr. Marco and VPH Laszlo Hayde (Hungary) informed the members about the proposed workshop on groundwater management and seawater intrusion to aquifers could be organised in virtual mode as a European Regional Workshop event. However, there were no further updates on this topic.

ERWG Minutes Item 8: Dissemination of activities of WG

ERWG Minutes Item 8.1: Website of the Group

14. President Honoraire Peter Lee (UK) informed the RWG that the website would be updated, as there might be some elements of information which might not be actual. Er. Harish Varma, Executive Director, ICID informed that Central Office will take further action in this regard, also involving more directly Dr. Madhu.

ERWG Minutes Item 8.2: Webinar / web-based Seminar

15. The RWG discussed the organization of web-based seminars/e-discussion that topic, speakers, date/month etc. Members were requested to suggest topics for the webinars.

ERWG Minutes Item 9: Any other business

10.1 ICID Members’ Profile Section: The group noted the information on ICID Members’ Profile Section and Chair invited members to visit the Profile Section for updating their information.

10.2 Register on World Irrigation and Drainage Schemes (WI&DS): RWG encouraged members to share appropriate data in ‘Register on World Irrigation and Drainage Schemes (WI&DS). The irrigation projects approved by National Committee/ ICID Central Office for inclusion will be entitled to Certification. Members were also requested to encourage all irrigation project owners, managers, and researchers for contributing to the register. The review process and other details are outlined on the portal in detail.

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