

**MINUTES FOR VIRTUAL 26TH MEETING OF THE
EUROPEAN REGIONAL WORKING GROUP (ERWG)**

20 October, 2020; 14:30 hours (IST)

Presented by the Chairman

Year of Establishment: 1995

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) Vice President Hon. Ian Makin (UK), Chairman; (2) Mr. Olli-Matti Verta (Finland), Secretary; (3) Prof. dr. sc. Davor Romić (Croatia); (4) Mr. Hannes Puu (Estonia); (5) Dr. Sami Bouarfa represented by Dr. Francois Brelle; (6) Mr. Archil Bukia (Georgia); (7) Vice President Dr. Marco Arcieri (Italy); (8) VPH Dr. Mrs. Irene Bondarik (Russia); (9) Prof. Dr. Klaus-Dieter Vorlop (Germany); (10) VPH Prof. Dr. Charlotte de Fraiture (The Netherlands); and (11) Secretary General represented Er. Harish K. Varma, Executive Director, ICID.

Observers: (i) PH Prof. Bart Schultz (The Netherlands); (ii) Mr. Ian Tod (UK); (iii) Prof. Bernard Vincent (France); and (iv) Mrs. Nata Khutsurauli (Georgia).

Website: http://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/106

ERWG Minutes Item 1: Action Taken Report by Chair

1. Vice President Hon. Ian Makin (UK), Chair of the WG presented a report on the actions taken on the decisions and proposals of the European Regional Working Group (ERWG) at its 25th meeting held at Bali, Indonesia in September 2020.

2. No new nominations for the membership of the ERWG were received from NCs during the year. Present membership status of ERWG is at **Annex 3 (page 43)**.

ERWG Minutes Item 1.1: Strengthening the membership in Europe

3. The Working Group discussed the current membership status and concerns expressed by the various National Committees (NCs) represented at the virtual meeting. The RWG noted that Ing. Inmaculada Bravo Dominguez, representative from Spain has informed the ICID CO that the Spanish National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (CERYD) will become an active member w.e.f. 1st January 2021. The RWG welcomed reactivation of membership of Spain and requested the Central Office to seek the nomination of a representative of CERYD to the RWG as quickly as practical. The efforts of VP Dr. Marco Arcieri in facilitating the membership of Spain were acknowledged.

4. During the virtual meeting, discussions mainly focused on the challenge of strengthening the membership of ICID within Europe. In this direction, the participants provided their views on the status and challenges faced by the National Committees (NCs) in their country, which are as follows:

5. VPH Francois Brelle (AFEID) explained that it is not possible to get Ministries financially involved even they agree the relevance of ICID. At present, AFEID can afford to pay ICID membership fees, thanks to the COSTEA contract signed with the AFD (French Development Agency). He further informed that some members of AFEID are questioning the added 'value of membership' of ICID.

6. Prof. Dr. Klaus Röttcher (Germany) highlighted the situation within GERCID. The interest in irrigation is high at federal state level, particularly Lower Saxony, but not at national level. The Government of Germany will not reactivate funding for GERCID.

7. Mr. Ian Todd (Chair of IWF/UK/ICID) informed that the relevance of irrigation and drainage too many potential UK members is hard to bridge as, within the UK, irrigation is the responsibility of individual farmers and farm groups. Membership of IWF/ICID.UK is getting older and there are a range of alternate professional organizations in the water sector that may appear more relevant to UK based young professionals.

8. VPH Prof. Dr. Charlotte de Fraiture (Chairperson of the Netherlands National Committee of ICID (NETHCID) explained that members are getting older, so there are less and less people participating in NETHCID activities. The topic is important, but there are many organizations in the water sector. The difficulty of ICID is to understand what the added value of membership of ICID is for potential members, and specifically for young professionals. We should brainstorm over the question: What does ICID offer that is not available without joining ICID?

9. VPH Irene Bondarik (Secretary General, RuCID) explained that their Ministry has already paid for 2020 and 2021. Since the National Committee has been moved from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Agriculture now, so RuCID is being reconstituted.

10. Mr. Olli-Matti Verta (FINCID) explained that funding for FINCID and membership of ICID comes from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Finnish Drainage Association. Funding for future years is more or less secured. From the FINCID point of view, there are at least couple of added values of ICID activities; (1) Active yearly Drainage workshops between FI, RUS and Baltic countries; (2) Bilateral cooperation between FINCID and SANCID has supported broader bilateral activities within water resources management between the countries; and (3) the Young Professional Forum has been seen and used as useful tool to activate young researchers to take part in activities and build personal contacts.

11. VP Dr Marco Arcieri (ITAL-ICID) informed that NC was struggling with funding couple of years ago, but currently they are on a positive path and their funding is secured from the Ministry of Agriculture. Italy is hosting important international UN Agencies, such as FAO and IFAD. ICID President Er. Felix Reinders (South Africa) was elected as the Chair of FAO WASAG-Programme. ITAL-CID, in collaboration with AFEID, facilitated Spain to again become a member of ICID. ITAL-ICID has also been discussing with Portugal and Greece to become member of ICID. VP Dr. Marco Arcieri emphasized that there are two crucial points which need to be considered i.e. (i) convince institutional side (e.g. Ministries) to support National Committees; and (ii) how to attract Young Professionals.

12. President Hon. Prof Bart Schultz (The Netherlands) addressed the importance of reactivation of National Committees and encouraged a strong focus on Young Professionals. PH Prof. Schultz also highlighted the importance of ensuring that ICID is recognized as being about more than just irrigation and drainage. The work on flood protection, environment, climate change and green infrastructure are of increasing relevance and may strengthen the added value of ICID to professionals in the water sector. The value of the international network that ICID offers should not be overlooked.

13. Mrs. Nata Khutsurauli (Georgia) noted that COVID-19 is having serious impacts on the economic situation in Georgia. The likely impact on membership of ICID is not yet known.

14. Prof. Bernard Vincent (AFEID) suggested that we explore how to access the financial resources from EU funding instruments like INTERREG. We should review key words for our activities and include words like nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, etc. to highlight the range of actions covered by ICID, which are more relevant to European region.

15. ICID Central Office proposed that they could help European Regional WG and NC's through:

- (a) connecting African Regional WG with ERWG
- (b) support to the Young Professionals
- (c) coastal flood management could be considered for further actions within ICID
- (d) help in bilateral connections and cooperation

16. After deliberations, it was agreed that ERWG needs to create a stronger and more compelling case to (i) attract new members and (ii) communicate with potential funding sources in government and industry to communicate the value of ICID to Europe based professionals and organizations. To this end, the WG proposed to develop an ICID-Europe communications strategy. The group also proposed to develop communication documents for ICID-Europe in order to first target at potential members and the second aimed at existing and potential funding agencies to help justify the allocation of resources.

17. Members were also of the view that more frequent activities of the ERWG will be required to move forward on the actions necessary to sustain the membership among the European nations. The use of Virtual / Online meeting is proposed to enable more frequent interactions among the ERWG and also to implement online events for ICID members in the region (and beyond). ICID CO will be requested to assist in setting up further meetings to work on the proposed communications materials and to contribute to development of the content. Although referred to as "Brochures" the ERWG recognizes that greater efforts to utilize social media, particularly LinkedIn etc. will be required to reach the target audience. The assistance of Central Office and the ICID young professional's network will be greatly appreciated.

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

18. During the virtual meeting of the ERWG, the Action Plan (Road Map to ICID Vision 2030) was reviewed and it was agreed that the focus of the group should be on strengthening the membership. A decision on a new milestone for 2022 was postponed to a further virtual meeting to be held before the next IEC meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco.

19. It was agreed that the focus areas for the ERWG remain under the three goals are: (i) **B1** – Disseminate the policy paper within ICID; (ii) **C3** – preparation of ICID Europe –brochures (one for use towards Ministries and other institutions and another to attract Young Professionals and others to take part in ICID activities) and (iii) Sharing online NC's work programmes and activities.

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

20. Mr. Olli-Matti Verta (FINCID) informed the value given to the Annual Baltic Drainage workshop, organized under the ICID banner. These events will continue. VP Dr. Marco Arcieri (ITAL-ICID) also informed about the value of AFEID organized events that he participated and which enabled him to network with existing and potential national member organizations.

ERWG Minutes Item 4: Review of policy issues impacting irrigation and drainage sector

21. ERWG discussed the issue of "Review of the policy documents related to water resources impacting irrigation and drainage sector in Europe", included in the Action Plan 2030 of the ERWG under **Goal B** (Activity **B2.1**: Review of European/NC policy documents related to water resources that impact irrigation and drainage sector). PH Prof. Bart Schultz apprised the members of the group that he has prepared a draft paper. ERWG agreed to circulate the paper for comments (4–5-week time for comments) after which the paper will be sent to ICID CO for wider circulation.

22. Following publication of the paper, ERWG suggests that a session at an ICID meeting or a webinar may be organized to disseminate the paper within ICID members.

ERWG Minutes Item 5: Links with regional and trans-national organizations for co-operation

23. This item could not be discussed during the time of the virtual meeting of the ERWG. It is hoped to revisit the topic during the proposed virtual meetings of the ERWG in 2021.

ERWG Minutes Item 6: Activities of Focus Groups of ERWG

24. This item could not be discussed during the time of the virtual meeting of the ERWG. It is hoped to revisit the topic during the proposed virtual meetings of the ERWG in 2021.

ERWG Minutes Item 7: Task Force on Legislative Framework on Agricultural Drought Mitigation for European Regional (TF-DMD) – Updates

25. The topic was discussed during the ICID Management Board Meeting held in March 2020 at Morocco where VP Dr. Marco Arcieri informed about the status of the activities. He informed that due to the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic task force activities could not be started in right earnest.

ERWG Minutes Item 8: Any other business

26. No AOB items were raised.

