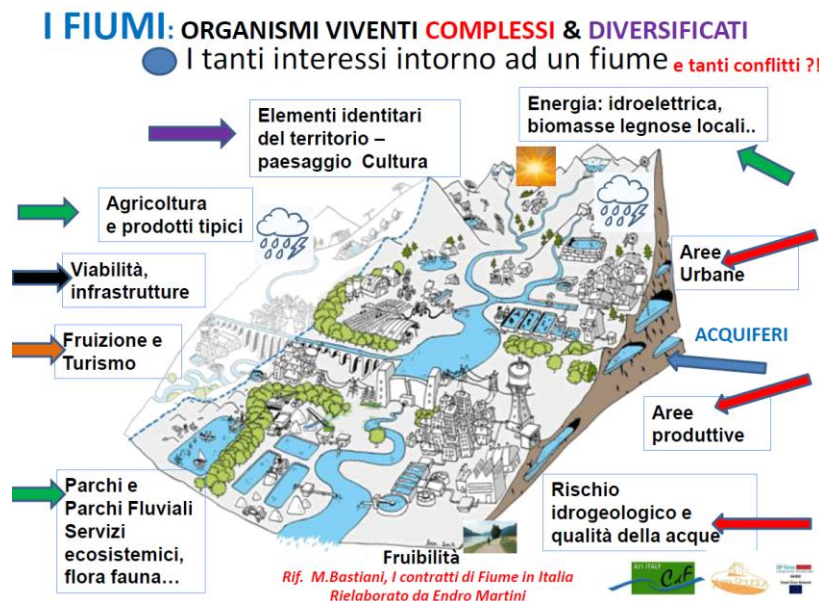


The Italian National Board of River Contracts (Tavolo Nazionale dei Contratti di Fiume - TNCdF): a bottom up innovative approach to enhance the participatory governance of river basin

By **Massimo BASTIANI** National Coordinator of the River Contract Table and Coordinator AG422 Smart River Network EIP Water and **Endro MARTINI** (National River Table Steering Committee, Alta Scuola President)

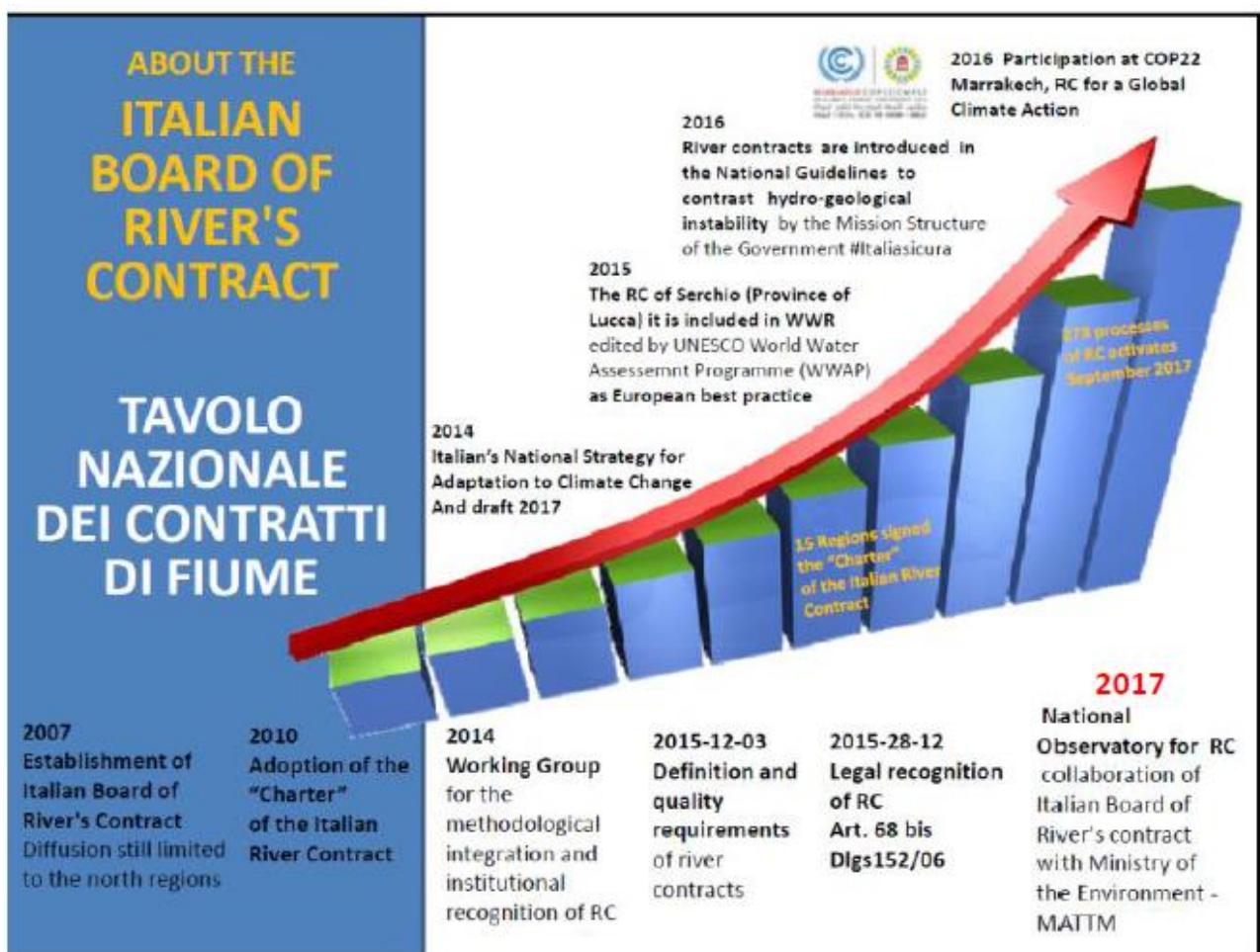
DESCRIPTION

The river contract is an example of how to contribute to ensuring the improvement of water quality, protection against flood risks, as well as the implementation of the WFD and FD through the voluntary development of programmes and action plans that can be applied in an effective manner to the water management. In Italy river contracts diffusion started (as a bottom up initiative) with the creation of a National Table of River Contracts (*Tavolo Nazionale dei Contratti di Fiume - TNCdF*) in 2007, that provided crucial support for the development of river contracts, as it became possible to coordinate efforts and compare experiences to build a culture of a participatory collective governance. In Italy, National Table of River Contracts, respond to the need for introducing new forms of governance as well as forms of voluntary cooperation that are requested by EU directives and guidelines in order to implement an integrated management of water, land and landscape in a shared and subsidiary manner. Amongst the factors that might have contributed to an improvement in the public participation processes in Italy there are the “National Table of River Contracts”, that is a bottom up movement to experiment and promote river contracts as a voluntary instrument (soft law) negotiated between institutions and the general public. They have contributed in Italy to the realization of (and to enhancement of) the objectives of the provisions on public participation contained in the WFD and implemented by the Italian Code on the Environment.



DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT (MARKET OR IMPLEMENTATION POTENTIAL) *

In the 2007 when the TNCdF has been created only 3 River Contracts were activated in Italy and all in Lombardy Region. At the current status in Italy there are more than 190 river contracts, announced or activated and about 30 of them have already reached the subscription¹. Among the Regions with the highest number of contracts signed, are: Lombardy 7 contracts already signed out of 11 processes activated; Piedmont 6 contracts signed out of 9 activated; Autonomous Province of Trento with 8 contracts signed. Recently, a significant development of the river contracts has taken place in the southern and central Italy. In Latium a regional office for river contracts has been activated and thanks to a call of proposals, 19 processes have been supported; in Calabria there are 19 processes, between announced and activated. In the 2016, also thanks to activity done by the TNCF the Environmental Annex (*Collegato Ambientale*), enforces the recognition (as per state law D.Lgs 152/2006) introduces River Contracts as normative (art. 68-bis): such recognition is a key passage for the development of River Contracts and the requalification of river basins. The table defined a National Charter of reference, (2010) and homogeneous criteria "Definitions and basic qualitative requirements of river contracts" (2015) which constitutes the "Modus Operandi" officially recognized and to be followed for the implementation of the River Contracts in Italy. The TNCdF has organised XI national conferences, at the meeting which was held at the Lombardy Region more than 600 participant have attended.



DICHIARAZIONE DI ROMA DEL 25 OTTOBRE 2017

Condivisa dai Gestori di Fiumi di oltre 90 Paesi dei Cinque Continenti e da quasi 300 organizzazioni che si occupano di Acqua

"Declaration of Rome" Priority Issue, N5:

Ensuring the effective participation of the civil society and stakeholders in decisionmaking and management processes, including local people, especially women and youth, and join the forces of all stakeholders, including the private sector, to build resilient communities and establish shared strategies. Access to information, training and environmental education needs to be improved around the world, especially for the most underprivileged or marginalized populations. In particular, it is necessary to use dialogue frameworks such as basin committees or councils, local water commissions or

River or Aquifer Contracts for this purpose.

Garantire effettiva partecipazione della società civile e delle parti interessate ai **processi decisionali e di gestione**, compresa la popolazione locale, soprattutto donne e giovani, **unire le forze di tutte le parti interessate, compreso il settore privato, costruire comunità resilienti e creare strategie condivise.**

L'accesso all'informazione, alla formazione e all'educazione ambientale deve essere migliorato in tutto il mondo, in particolare per le popolazioni più sfavorite o emarginate. **In particolare, è necessario utilizzare a questo scopo ambiti di dialogo, come** i Comitati o i Consigli di Bacino, le Commissioni Locali per l' Acqua e

i Contratti di Fiume o di Acquifero

DESCRIPTION OF REPLICABILITY POTENTIAL *

At international level National Board, led from 2015 the EIP Water Action Group (AG) "Smart Rivers Network", with specific goal to transform river basins in more Smart Rivers contexts. The AG intends to contribute to the diffusion of participative governance in the management of European hydrologic basins, through the activation of a cooperative network. The Italian approach in 2016 has been applied in Moldova by the SMARIGO project supported by the EU Commission CEI Programme. In 2015 the experience of the river contract promoted by TNCdF, it is included in the WWAP UNESCO – World Water Report as European best practices.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROPOSED SOLUTION TO THE WATER EUROPE VISION THE "VALUE OF WATER" *

The river contract is an example of how to contribute to ensuring the improvement of water quality, protection against flood risks, as well as the implementation of the WFD and FD through the voluntary development of programmes and action plans that can be applied in an effective manner to the water management. In this Contract local communities lie at the centre of a participatory and governance process; they become the main actors in protecting rivers as collective resources, stopping the degradation and disappearance of natural landscapes, maintaining biodiversity and the environment, and achieving more efficient use and sustainable management of these valuable resources. The strength of river contracts lies in their prioritization of direct consultation with a broad multi-stakeholder group. Projects under these contracts are often implemented through public-private partnerships, which grant greater efficiency and enable job creation. Global public-private partnerships are expected to grow in importance in the future, covering a broad spectrum of issues such as standard setting and law enforcement in the field of environmental protection. Indeed, collective governance such as this is increasingly associated with successful efforts towards sustainable development. Voluntary initiatives sustained by public participation strengthen the capacity to deal with a number of formidable challenges such as climate change adaptation or, more simply, make possible to enhance the efficacy and scope of existing regulations, as in the case of the implementation of the WFD and the FD. Many tangible results of this approach can be seen today in Italy, France, Belgium and Spain.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

The message from UNESCO's Dep. Coordinator of the WWAP at the SMART Rivers Network Conference (promoted by TNCdF - 2017) was simple "It won't take much to make substantial steps towards safe guarding water supply and water quality". The role of TNCdF and in general of the River Contracts and public participation is key. If the perception of the general public can be changed from 'What River?' to 'My River' ownership and responsibility for improving rivers begins to change. River Contracts provide the framework to enable this discussion and have the advantage of bringing together professionals, market actors, politicians and the residents of the area.

RIVER CONTRACTS HARWARD

Since 2012, the National Table has established an award for the best proposals and the best implementations of River Contracts in Italy

DAL 2012 PREMIO NAZIONALE CONTRATTI DI FIUME



CALL FOR PAPERS
PREMIO
Contratti di Fiume 2018
XI ° Tavolo
Entro Novembre 2017

NETWORKING INTEREST *

Policy – water governance

The improvement of the water governance promoted by the National Board of River Contracts, can greatly contribute to the design and implementation of european water policies, in shared responsibility across levels of government, civil society, business and the broader range of stakeholders who have an important role to play alongside policy maker to reap the economic, social and environmental benefits of good water governance.

PROJECT PROPOSAL TO FORUM

Dialog on Water Democracy, Public Participation and Water Governance, toward an innovative and more sustainable management of the river and lake basins Session Meeting.

In line with the initiatives taken so far and taking into account the concerns and expectations of the communities of the international river and lake basins, we propose the daily meeting- Dialog on Water Democracy, Public Participation and Water Governance, toward an innovative and more sustainable management of the river and lake basins - between the heads of river and lake basin organizations and associations, including transboundary

Tavolo Nazionale dei Contratti di Fiume EIP Water smart river network basins, for a constructive dialogue, to promote the exchange of experiences, information and know-how on sustainable management and the implementation of joint actions and projects, better supported financially, to

improve the anticipation of future scenarios and prevent the potential conflicts between the different users of the resource. The effective participation of civil society and stakeholders in decision-making and management processes is to be ensured, including local people, especially women and youth, and it is advisable to join the forces of all stakeholders, including the private sector, to build resilient communities and establish shared strategies. Access to information, training and environmental education needs to be improved around the world, especially for the most under privileged or marginalized populations. In particular, it is necessary to use dialogue frameworks, such as river contracts for this purpose. The role of TNCdF and in general of the River Contracts and public participation is key. If the perception of the general public can be changed from ‘What River?’ to ‘My River’ ownership and responsibility for improving rivers begins to change. River Contracts provide the framework to enable this discussion and have the advantage of bringing together professionals, market actors, politicians and inhabitants.

Public and Private Authorities/Bodies to be involved worldwide The dialog has to involve different countries and experiences, in particular where there are meaningful initiatives in progress. River contracts and other participatory approaches are adopted with success in: Italy, France, Spain, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Quebec, Moldova, Alpine Convention countries, ecc.

The National Board of River Contracts 10 years of a peaceful revolution: from ‘What River?’ to ‘My River’

National Board of River Contracts (Web site) <http://nuke.a21fiumi.eu/>
 Smart Rivers Network (AG224) <https://www.eip-water.eu/SmartRiverNw>

Alta Scuola (Web site) <https://www.altascuola.org/>

River contracts for sustainable development in the Italian context: The Serchio River case study [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015](#), pp 15-18 **Language: English** | Also available in [Chinese](#) **by M.Bastian, E.Martini, G Pineschi.**



The Italian law on River Contracts. Art 68 bis of the Environmental Code

**Decreto legislativo 3 aprile 2006, n. 152 e successive modifiche e integrazioni :
 NORME IN MATERIA AMBIENTALE**

Dispositivo dell'art. 68 bis Codice dell'ambiente

Fonti → Codice dell'ambiente → PARTE TERZA - Norme in materia di difesa del suolo e lotta alla desertificazione, di tutela delle acque dall'inquinamento e di gestione delle risorse idriche → Sezione I - Norme in materia di difesa del suolo e lotta alla desertificazione → Titolo II - I distretti idrografici, gli strumenti, gli interventi → Capo II - Gli strumenti

1. I contratti di fiume concorrono alla definizione e all'attuazione degli strumenti di pianificazione di distretto a livello di bacino e sottobacino idrografico, quali strumenti volontari di programmazione strategica e negoziata che perseguono la tutela, la corretta gestione delle risorse idriche e la valorizzazione dei territori fluviali, unitamente alla salvaguardia dal rischio idraulico, contribuendo allo sviluppo locale di tali aree.