

STATEMENTS

FOR THE PANEL DISCUSSION IN “TWINNING OF RIVER COMMISSIONS

1. There are many international agreements, conferences, approaches and initiatives on water. Each of these is stressing the need for cooperating on a political level between regions, countries, organisations. Going from Vision to Action requires the actual support for river commissions (also: basin organisations) to increase their capabilities for implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) on a river basin level. **Twinning of River Commissions is an excellent instrument to upgrade and support the development of IWRM.**
2. Twinning of River Commissions in the end will result in obtaining concrete results to stimulate and support IWRM. Moreover, recommendations from many international agreements can effectively be implemented thanks to this concept. By facilitating direct exchanges on best practices, and as well on failed experiments, twinning can help river commissions to improve their effectiveness by a greater technical, scientific and institutional expertise. **Twinning is a form of peers opinion regarding administrative, technical and or institutional aspects, coming from a sister organisation managing a basin in another geographical, political or economic context.**
3. There are many types of River Commissions, some of them existing for several decades, and a lot in development process; they present a great diversity of legal statutes and economic schemes. None of these examples can be regarded as a model: each country must conceive its own system. But years of practice allow to establish some generally admitted principles such as autonomy, transparency, responsibility, equity, stakeholder participation, anticipation and public information. **Twinning of River Commissions is not an approach that should be exercised on a short term basis. In some cases experience was built over a number of years, any commission interested in learning from such experience will understand that learning from other organisations should be seen in a longer term perspective.**
4. Generally, river commissions do not have the means available for international cooperation that is outside its mandate.
For twinning of international river commissions to become a success, external financing by multilateral, multinational organisations is a prerequisite.
5. **Basin wide programming of IWRM by river commissions ‘in development’ will be helped by twinning arrangements with a mature commission**
6. **Twinning is a delicate instrument in a broad spectrum of IWRM oriented initiatives on the multilateral, bilateral, national, regional and local level**

Additional points for discussion

Twinning arrangements without (any) international (co)-financing are deemed to 'fail'

The INBO-GWP Associated Program 'Developing and strengthening of River Basin Organisations' is an excellent platform for creating awareness and for sharing information on twinning projects. The Associated Program should put more efforts in presenting the actual results of individual projects and the lessons learned from these projects, not only with the members of INBO but above all with the international water community.

Twinning of river commissions requires a structured mode for cooperation for at least a period of 3-5 years, and should identify topics for cooperation and set objectives to be realised.