

The 5th European River Restoration Conference

The European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR), alongside the RESTORE partners and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), organized the 5th European River Restoration Conference from **11-13 September, 2013**, in Vienna, Austria.

This European River Restoration Conference, amongst other contributions, showcased inspiring examples of river restoration and shared lessons learned about the successes, challenges, and opportunities for river restoration in Europe. The conference brought together over 300 key policy makers, restoration practitioners, and scientists to discuss opportunities for river restoration to achieve a number of environmental, economic, and social objectives.

The conference also featured the 1st European Riverprize, which was awarded by the International River Foundation to the Rhine River and the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine River (ICPR). The ICPR's longevity and legacy of success go beyond the scope of the WFD, fostering international cooperation and mutual understanding to improve the health of the Rhine. Continuing to expand cooperation among the restoration community, stakeholders, and impacted communities and communicating this work to the general public will be necessary to tackle the current and future challenges of restoring rivers.

The Final **Declaration of Vienna was made up on the 13th September 2013**. This declaration synthesises the key issues for the coming years. The participants of the fifth European River Restoration Conference felt that these issues should be at the forefront of river restoration and work together with some examples of the key actions required to address them. The Declaration states that to reverse the effects of development and its associated drivers and pressures in rivers, ecosystem approaches must be integrated into river planning and management. Cross-cutting approaches that consider multiple actors and communities and have realistic targets are needed to help guide future restoration work.

REFORM was featured in a special side event, where conference participants were informed about the project's objectives and key contributions in science and practice of river restoration. Presentations were held by Tom Buijse, Christian Wolter, Brandon Goeller, and Gertjan Geerling, and the audience was engaged in discussions about REFORM's development. The side event was an excellent opportunity to showcase REFORM to active members of the European river restoration community, and the response to the project was very positive. All presentations from the conference are available online.

Strides have been made in creating a more inclusive dialogue about restoring rivers, including consultation with stakeholders and impacted communities. There is growing momentum for river restoration to continue moving into the public spotlight and gain broader acceptance. Large conferences such as the 5th European River Restoration Conference in Vienna, as well as large international projects like the EU Projects LIFE+ RESTORE and FP7 REFORM provide an outlet and platform for the river restoration community to critically examine the progress made and continue growing.



Impressions of the 5th European River Restoration Conference. Photos courtesy of the RESTORE project.

Further links

- The 5th European River Restoration Conference webpage, including the final declaration of Vienna, conference programme, presentations, videos, and photos
<http://www.restorerivers.eu/NewsEvents/ERRC2013/tabid/3167/Default.aspx>
- The RESTORE project website <http://www.restorerivers.eu/>, including links to the REFORM partners' websites (Wetlands International, Environment Agency (England), River Restoration Centre (UK), Dienst Landelijk Gebied (NL), SYKE (FI), and CIRF (IT))

- The European Centre for River Restoration <http://www.ecrr.org/>, including a special newsletter covering the ERRC
- More information about the International River Foundation's 2013 European Riverprize http://www.riverfoundation.org.au/riverprize_european.php

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