

Contribution to 1st GEF biennial Conference, Vienna
Abstract for Sunday, 15-10-00; Session IV
Lessons of Experience – Longstanding Multicountry Institutions

The International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine.

**The International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, ICPR:
a success story with fifty years experience.**

The Rhine Commission started as early as 1950; nevertheless the Rhine deteriorated further with an absolute low around 1970.

The real successes were realized as a concerted, harmonized reaction on catastrophes: the Action Program Rhine as a reaction on the Sandoz fire 1986 and the Action Plan on Flood Defense as a reaction on the floods of 1993 and '95.

But formulation/compilation of comprehensive plans like these are only possible if there is a sound basis for international cooperation. This basis should be made up of political willing, mutual confidence and technical know how and scientific knowledge. By the way, it is only since a few years people dare to speak of success.

Now that the Rhine has reached again a quite good quality, people want more: bathing water quality, for example.

The 1987 decision to reintroduce the salmon in the Rhine was jeered at those days by a lot of people. As the first salmon ascended the river Rhine some years ago, only specialists talked about it. At the barrage of Iffezheim the largest fish ladder of Europe has been opened this summer 2000, just on the anniversary of the ICPR. Already forty salmon, 400 sea trout have been counted there since then. But the number of scholar groups, associations and clubs visiting this fish ladder is almost greater! So public support and thus political support for more will be growing.

Harm Oterdoom
Executive Secretary
ICPR
Postfach 20 02 53
D-56002 Koblenz

Tel. +49-(0)261-12495
Fax +49-(0)261-36572
e-mail: harm.oterdoom@iksr.de
Homepage: www.iksr.org