



# EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION

Riverside communities  
Water citizenship  
Action Research & Learning

## Our goal


The association , created in December 2023, aims to inform, **raise awareness** and **defend the interests** of **citizens**, **users**, **local communities** and **environments** in order to promote a **societal and environmental approach** to water as a “common good”, via all kind of heritage in **Europe**. It is open to citizens, associations, territorial and public actors, experts and researchers.

Photo: Elodie Denizart - Vézère river in Treignac (France)

« If you have to treat water, first consult  
experience, then reason. »

- Léonard de Vinci

# Our findings

The rivers, ponds, lakes, water bodies, wetlands and canals of Europe are the result of the **long reciprocal influence of nature and society**, in a history that has lasted for several millennia.

*Another vision  
of water  
is possible*

The water in our environment is thus a physical and cultural, social and economic, material and symbolic phenomenon: all these dimensions are intertwined. **Only an integrative, global and open vision of water will enable us to support sustainable development.** This is an important issue for present and future generations, since water is a critical resource for both animal and vegetal living species.

This rich, complex and hybrid reality of water has already been highlighted by scientific research, but it is still too little studied and has not earned its place in the **European public debate**.

The dialog is today made impossible through two predominantly opposite approaches : a **naturalist approach**, which sees water as a theoretical ideal of nature without human impact, and an **economist approach**, which sees water as an exploitable resource without life or history.

*Put citizens  
at the heart of  
water policies*

At a time when European Union is thinking about a necessary **Blue Deal**, **AQUA!** wishes to put the societal dimension of water at the heart of debate.

Listening to citizens and riverside communities from all watersheds in Europe, and accompanied by experts on the ground, researchers and scientists... **AQUA!** wishes **to facilitate the emergence of acceptable solutions for all.**

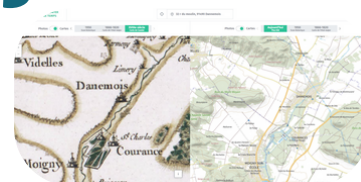


# 10 interlinked challenges

## 1. TO UNDERSTAND THE HISTORY OF WATER USE



Sage of the Lys (Hauts-de-France, France)



Comparison of background maps (Cassini)

## 2. TO SUPPORT A TERRITORIAL APPROACH BASED ON WATERSHEDS

## 3. TO ENHANCE OUR HERITAGE



Chain of lakes, European metropole of Lille (Hauts-de-France, France)



Landscape of water mill (Occitanie, France)

## 4. TO PROPOSE SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

## 5. TO PRESERVE EXISTING HYDRAULIC STRUCTURES



Meander of Queuille (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France)



Weir of an ancient forge (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France)

## 6. TO APPREHEND HYDROGEOLOGY

## 7. TO PROTECT AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT



Newsletter - Interreg Europe Project Wave, FEB 23



Rehabilitated pond (Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France)

## 8. TO MAKE THE KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE

## 9. TO PREVENT WATER-RELATED NATURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS



EESC Declaration, OCT 23



Dam failure following a flood (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France)

## 10. TO INCLUDE WATER IN TERRITORIAL POLICIES

# 7 proposals for action

- 1. SPEAK OUT**

Advocacy / Speeches by experts / Presentation of territorial feedback from expertise at events (local, regional, national, European) / Relay of information from partners
- 2. ANALYSE, WRITE, CONVINCE**

Drafting arguments supported by scientific sources / Summary work based on conferences, documents, videos, books... / Drafting responses to public enquiries / Data collection and position papers for public consultations
- 3. SET UP COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

Setting-up and supporting the creation and management of European projects: European Commission programmes (Life, Interreg, Horizon, Cerv, Erasmus, Creative Europe, etc.), European Investment Bank facilities
- 4. CONSULT, ANIMATE**

Development of tailor-made tools for local consultation and coordination / Organisation of site visits, itineraries, exhibits / Increasing knowledge on water heritage in river basins (territorial inventories)
- 5. UP-SKILL**

Creation of tailor-made training courses/modules (online, on site, in class, hybrid) / Skills leverage using varied and multidisciplinary expertise / Specific interventions in courses (secondary and higher education)
- 6. BRING KNOWLEDGE**

Setting-up webinars and events relative to water heritage / Supporting and supervising students and trainees / Capitalising on European projects and good practices / Science popularisation
- 7. NETWORK**

Bringing together resource players / Partnership initiatives and working groups / Running social media communities / Taking part in trade fairs, forums and congress

# Our assets

## RESOURCE CENTRE

Data, information,  
communication


## NETWORK OF COMPETENCES

People &  
organisations

## SERVICE PROVIDER

Third-party  
contract work

## How can you help us to promote water heritage ?

By becoming an active member of  you can:

- Join one of our colleges
- Participate in our working groups and propose subjects for joint work
- For members of colleges I. and IV. you can take part in the governance of the association
- Be territorial referent for your watershed area (at all possible scales) and go beyond administrative boundaries
- Co-write scientific publications to support a subject where data is lacking
- Access to a network of water heritage professionals throughout Europe

## Through a collective intelligence approach

- By sharing our vision and publications on social networks
- By coming to debate with us, in the field, or at conferences or webinars
- By commissioning us to provide services based on our many multi-disciplinary skills!

## Some examples of our actions

- Presentations, speeches, participation in local, national and European events: General meetings of water heritage associations, information days on European programmes, World Water Day, Green Week in Brussels, European Heritage Days, Doctoriales in the social sciences for water...
- Initiation of projects under the Interreg Europe Programme
- Setting-up of a micro-certification with the Cnam
- Support to the emergence of citizen and renewable energy communities for water mills renovation and reactivation

## Our administrative board

**Pascal BARTOUT**, Deputy Secretary, University professor specialised in water bodies, based at the University of Orléans (Loiret, Centre-Val de Loire)

**Dominique BLAISE**, Administrator, President of the professional syndicate Hydro BV (Haute-Vienne, Nouvelle-Aquitaine)

**Charles-François CHAMPETIER**, Administrator, President of the NGO Hydraulixois (Yonne, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté)

**Élodie DENIZART**, President, consultant in ecological transition for territories in Europe (Nord, Hauts-de-France)

**Olivier FOUCHÉ-GROBLA**, Administrator, Senior lecturer at the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (Cnam), Paris (Ile-de-France)

**Christian JACQUEMIN**, Deputy treasurer, President of the association of riverside community and hydraulic structures owners in Châtillonnais - Arpohc (Côte d'Or, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté)

**Martin KELLER**, Secretary, Project manager in renewable energies (Drôme, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes)

**Clément VAN STRAATEN**, Treasurer, founder of the society Askeul, in renewables and fatal energy recovering (Rhône, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes)

## Our founding members

**Vincent ALCANIZ**, Founder and President of Provence hydro énergie

**Thierry ALLIET**, Founder of Moulins patrimoines

**Rik DE BAERDEMAEKER**, Project manager of Molencentrum (Belgium)

**Nicolas COIRAL**, Commercial service agent and fisherman

**Maxime DELACOURT**, Founder of Moulins demain

**Serge DESPEYROUX**, President of Udaf (Department Union for family associations) in Lot, President of the Quercy water mills association

**Pierre-Olivier FRAPPART**, Engineer for agriculture techniques

**François FRICAUDET**, Retired public works engineer, President of the Val d'Arconce Charolais-Brionnais association

**Gilles GAREL**, Professor of innovation management at the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (Cnam)

**Antoine GUIBERT**, Engineer in water science and technology, Chairman of Envinergy

**Jean-Jacques HERIN**, Expert in sustainable and integrated stormwater management, Chairman of Adopta association

**Albert HIGOUNENC**, Retired mining engineer, builder and exhibitor of an award-winning micro hydropower station

**Francis LEFEBVRE-VARY**, President of the Morvan and Nièvre mills association

**Damien LENOËL**, Engineer in energy and renewables, consulting Lenoël Hydro

**Christian LÉVÊQUE**, Doctor of science, emeritus research director at the IRD, retired

**Michał KUBECKI**, Engineer, editor-in-chief of the Polish magazine 'Energetyka Wodna' (Poland)

**Anick MARECHAL and Bernard ROUSSEAU**, Retired art teacher and architect, environmental activists

**Dominique PERCHET**, Geographer and administrator of Cilac (national association for industrial heritage)

**Bruno PERRET**, Member of the association "friends of mills in Ain"

**Emanuele QUARANTA**, Expert in hydraulic wheels and hydropower (Italy)

**André QUIBLIER**, Retired managing director of an international transport company, chairman of the association "friends of mills in Orne"

**Silvia RICHARD**, Civil and hydraulic engineer, hydrologist, manager of Conexig France

**Laurent TOUCHART**, University professor in geography, specialist in ponds and lakes



**You want to know more? To contact us ? To support us ?**

Write to us at: [contact@aqua-asso.eu](mailto:contact@aqua-asso.eu) or subscribe to our [Linkedin page](#)

