

## Preface

Floodplain ecosystems comprise a mosaic of shifting habitats (forests, river channels and alluvial aquifers) with high interdependency. Flood pulse, hydrological connectivity and geomorphological dynamics are key factors for high species diversity and productivity, complexity in successional trajectories and importance of ecotones between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Most rivers in Europe have been drastically altered by dams and reservoirs, canalisation, reduction of the wetland area, eutrophication and various other land-use developments. After a very long period of destruction of floodplain integrity, the need for protecting and restoring alluvial ecosystems slowly became apparent over the last 3 decades. The symposium ((European floodplains 2002» follows a series of meetings focusing on such topics. A first international symposium was held in Strasbourg in 1980. It resulted in a common statement adopted by the 94 researchers from the represented countries. This text instigated Recommendation R(82)12 on the alluvial forests of Europe approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The main theme of the Symposium 2002 in Strasbourg, will be ((Assessment of long-term river management on floodplain forest and grassland, and lateral arms ecology>>.

### Organising committee

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