End of the 70's. Most European rivers are at death's door, overexploited. Contamination is generalized, swimming is forbidden. Salmon are even gone from the Rhone and the Elbe.

1984. Large citizen protest movements are well-employment great dams from being built on the Danube.

1985. France decides to exploit the Loire, its last river still somewhat wild. The Loire and France Nature Environment launch the Loire Vivante Committee to organize the opposition.

1989. In the Upper Loire watershed, the association SOS Loire Vivante is created and fiercely fights against the first of a series of dams planned on the Loire and its tributaries.

1992. the Loire Vivante Committee is awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize through Christine Jean, French coordinator for the network. This shows global recognition of the actions led in favour of the Loire.

1994. France abandons its Loire exploitation project and enters the Loire Grandes Nature Parks, the 1st major European project to protect a river!

1994 (end). Creation of European Rivers Network (ERN) in France by Francois Eggelin with the support of Dr Phil Williams (International Rivers Network USA) and of the WWF! The SOS Loire Vivante Association became ERN France - SOS Loire Vivante.

1997. Development of the first European Public policies to protect and restore rivers.

2000. Europe votes the Water Framework Directive which demands the rehabilitation of surface waters (objective currently positioned from 2015 to 2021 due to lack of satisfactory results).

To define its strategy, and main areas of work, ERN organizes a ‘thinkcamp’ and invites representatives for environmental protection associations from twenty or so European countries, as well as observers from other continents.

Since 2000… ERN has developed numerous partnerships concerning the 50 main rivers of Europe. ERN now wishes to bring this strategy to life through the various actions outlined in this flyer. In 2019, ERN celebrated its 35th birthday.

ERN's actions are based on the consideration of river basins in their entirety, including when they cross borders, and the capacity of streams to regenerate when they are free. ERN tries to establish linkages between approaches which are more respectful of rivers, and towards alternatives to building to foster a different river culture, something that global warming makes even more indispensable. A main priority uses guide its actions:

- The preservation of rivers as ecosystems, with all the biodiversity that goes with them, allows first and foremost to maintain their dynamics and resilience… A healthy river does indeed possess tremendous potential for evolution, a strong capacity for regeneration and provides ‘ecosystemic services’ to humans, for free.

- Getting rid of obstacles, be they dams or weirs, which hinder streams is the most efficient way to restore them, by re-establishing their natural dynamics and reconnecting them with wetlands, water tables, old channels… Rivers are, by definition, flowing, mobility corridors for water, sediments, for animal and plant life, and for Men!

- It is essential to create networks and work with those who, all over the world, advocate for rivers and streams, whether locally or globally… Pooling together our energies as well as experiences, beyond administrative, political, linguistic or cultural barriers! Acting together allows first and foremost to maintain their dynamics and resilience… A healthy river does indeed possess tremendous potential for evolution, a strong capacity for regeneration and provides ‘ecosystemic services’ to humans, for free.

- Protecting water, sediments, for animal and plant life… and for Men!

- and the way they work, making room for them again in our everyday lives… We must go impetuous, and that their beauty also stems from these characteristics? Relearning rivers of us are still aware that rivers are beautiful, how many know that they are also fickle and currently in our lives, the room devoted to natural elements is shrinking… Though many experiences, beyond administrative, political, linguistic or cultural barriers! Acting together allows first and foremost to maintain their dynamics and resilience… A healthy river does indeed possess tremendous potential for evolution, a strong capacity for regeneration and provides ‘ecosystemic services’ to humans, for free.

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**OUR ACTIONS TO PROTECT, FREE, RESTORE AND RELEARN RIVERS IN FRANCE AND IN EUROPE**

**Protecting France’s water**
- The level of pressure and interference in an extraordinary period of spring, spring-like conditions, followed by the most beautiful rivers in France and beyond: the Loire, the Rhine and the Elbe rivers. ERN works to preserve this water body by connecting people and initiatives from across the watershed and activities works towards the creation of a UNESCO Man and Biosphere project which would facilitate shared development of both economic and ecological concerns and provide an international recognition to the area.

**www.ern.org/en/rivers-labels**

**Protecting and promoting the high quality rivers**
- The legal framework has been improved through the recognition of the most beautiful coastal rivers in Corsica. ERN decided to cooperate in a variety of life cycle assessments of existing infrastructures. ERN is now working on the international development of other projects, like the Rhine basin open channel pilot as well as the Alpstein Cross-country and the Baltic Sea, two regions which are particularly threatened by the uncontrolled flow of hydropower, encouraging operators to improve their equipment. ERN is opposed to the creation of small power stations due to their insignificant energy contribution and the significant nuisance they entail.

**www.ern.org/en/hydropower**

**Freeing - Restoring**
- The networks of living rivers are particularly threatened by the unchecked growth of hydroelectricity which are often supported by governments to have an economic value, but also to have an impact hydropower, encouraging operators to improve their equipment. ERN is opposed to the creation of small power stations due to their insignificant energy contribution and the significant nuisance they entail.

**www.ern.org/en/learning-rivers-europe**

**Restoring - Relearning**
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**www.ern.org/en/living-rivers-europe**

**In France and in Europe**

**RIVERS OF PICTURES AND FLOW OF WORDS**

**Rediscovering flood risk culture**
- Just like the Loire, the river is exposed to a very significant and dangerous flood risk. The MSV, from its collective memory, could have dramatic consequences on the inhabitants and the territory’s economy. According to its past experience with the Loire, ERN has gathered a wealth of experience and resources on the topic of ‘river culture’ in partnership with all Loire rivers and UNESCO-EPCC.


**Swimming to bridge the gap**
- 209th-century citizens were dispossessed of their rivers, sacrificed to industrial uses. To recreate strong links between citizens and rivers, ERN is a founding member of the TIGER (Towards An MAB UNESCO Loire Allier) Reserve. ERN is dedicated to working at the level of the Loire catchment area in the protection of the most beautiful coastal rivers in Corsica, ERN decided to cooperate in the variety of life cycle assessments of existing infrastructures. ERN is now working on the international development of other projects, like the Rhine basin open channel pilot as well as the Alpstein Cross-country and the Baltic Sea, two regions which are particularly threatened by the uncontrolled flow of hydropower, encouraging operators to improve their equipment. ERN is opposed to the creation of small power stations due to their insignificant energy contribution and the significant nuisance they entail.

**www.ern.org/en/dam-removal/**

**TOWARDS AN MAB UNESCO ALLIER ARDECHE RESERVE**

**Connectivity - Europe**
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**www.ern.org/en/poutes-barrage**

**FOR LIVING RIVERS**
- The networks of living rivers are particularly threatened by the unchecked growth of hydroelectricity which are often supported by governments to have an economic value, but also to have an impact hydropower, encouraging operators to improve their equipment. ERN is opposed to the creation of small power stations due to their insignificant energy contribution and the significant nuisance they entail.

**www.ern.org/en/hydropower**

**HYDROELECTRICITY: LESS AND BETTER**
- The legal framework has been improved through the recognition of the most beautiful coastal rivers in Corsica. ERN decided to cooperate in a variety of life cycle assessments of existing infrastructures. ERN is now working on the international development of other projects, like the Rhine basin open channel pilot as well as the Alpstein Cross-country and the Baltic Sea, two regions which are particularly threatened by the uncontrolled flow of hydropower, encouraging operators to improve their equipment. ERN is opposed to the creation of small power stations due to their insignificant energy contribution and the significant nuisance they entail.

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**FOR EUROPEAN RIVERS**
- The networks of living rivers are particularly threatened by the unchecked growth of hydroelectricity which are often supported by governments to have an economic value, but also to have an impact hydropower, encouraging operators to improve their equipment. ERN is opposed to the creation of small power stations due to their insignificant energy contribution and the significant nuisance they entail.

**www.ern.org/en/dam-removal/**

**RIVERS OF PICTURES AND FLOW OF WORDS**
- Arts as a means to access knowledge!
- Whether site-specific or an Ellen MacArthur-ecosystem project on the Elbe, in Germany, then expanded it to the Loire to give it a great and genuine visio, by selecting people and initiatives from across the watershed and activities works towards the creation of a UNESCO Man and Biosphere project which would facilitate shared development of both economic and ecological concerns and provide an international recognition to the area.

**www.ern.org/en/rivers-of-pictures/**

**INFORMATION WITHOUT BORDERS FOR EUROPEAN RIVERS**
- When solidarity promotes and activates the circulation of ideas
- By sending newsletters and creating content for websites and several languages, for various international water communication programmes. ERN has been able to speak out and gain visibility, to not only our own campaigns but also the activities of other rivers and women in Europe and for light years long for being heard, and this for over 26 years, sharing the campaigns we followed and / or supported. West Hoolen Valley (UK), Rive Vercors, Save the Bio-Chain or Blue Heart of Europe (Belgium).

**www.ern.org**