



## PRESS RELEASE

13 April 2006

*FLAPP: Flood Awareness & Prevention Policy in border areas*

### **Flood awareness reduces damages and saves lives**

**ENNISKILLEN, Northern Ireland – After the devastating floods in August 2002, the Elbe region in Saxony is currently affected by a flood once again. Also the river Danube and one of its main tributaries, the river Tisza are reaching critical water levels. Despite efforts made by governments, floods are a natural phenomenon which can not always be prevented. But what can be prevented is a crisis situation in which people do not know what to do. By informing citizens damages to properties can be reduced and lives can be saved.**

Flood awareness has been the central theme of an international conference of European flood experts who gathered in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of April '06. Participants of an EU funded project on 'Flood Awareness and Prevention Policy in border areas' discussed how to make inhabitants of flood prone areas more aware of the potential risk they run.

*Flooding: Plan. Prepare. Protect.*

"Individuals also carry responsibility for the protection of their families and property" said Tom Bolger of the Office of Public Works in Ireland on Thursday 6 April '06. He presented a great example of making the public more aware of floods. Good communication about the risks and what to do can make a substantial difference in the number of victims and damage caused by a flood. In 2005 the Republic of Ireland developed a new national policy to minimise the risk caused by floods. Elements of this new approach are acceptance of living with floods and publicly available flood hazard information and maps. Handy information booklets are available and a recently launched website ([www.flooding.ie](http://www.flooding.ie)) provides practical tips on what to do before, during and after a flood.

*Guidelines for citizens*

On Friday 7 April another example of raising flood awareness was presented at the FLAPP conference in Enniskillen. In one of the workshop sessions, Peter Notten of the waterboard Roer & Overmaas in the Netherlands, showed how people in the areas surrounding the river Meuse have



recently been informed about potential flood risk in their area. Part of this local information programme are a brochure and field exercises. As a result of the conference workshop generic guidelines for citizens on how to reduce the consequences of floods will be created by the FLAPP network. These guidelines will not be specifically applicable in one area but can be used throughout Europe.

#### *What is FLAPP?*

FLAPP stands for "Flood Awareness and Prevention Policy in border areas". It is an EU-funded network through which local and regional flood experts from across Europe share knowledge and experience about how to prevent and forecast floods, evacuate people and limit the damage when floods happen. FLAPP comprises 37 partners located in eight river basins in 14 countries.

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#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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#### **NOTE FOR EDITORS**

##### *What is FLAPP?*

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##### *Partner organisations*

The FLAPP network consists of 37 organisations in 14 different countries in Europe. Partners are spread over several catchment areas, amongst which are the rivers Danube, Tisza, Ebro, Meuse, Rhine, Scheldt, Elbe and Oder. Three partners are located in non-EU countries (Romania and Serbia-Montenegro). FLAPP participants range from local and regional water managers on the operational level to university researchers. Lead partner of the FLAPP network is the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (Maastricht, The Netherlands). See map for partner locations and catchment areas.

##### *Expected results*

The network operates from January 2005 until August 2007. It develops long-term practical ideas for managing rivers and streams in ways that protect the environment as well as defending Europe's communities and economy. The FLAPP network will produce a flood management guide with some concrete examples of projects in European border areas. Based on practical knowledge and experiences the FLAPP network will also try to formulate an integrated approach to flood management in border areas and produce policy recommendations.

*INTERREG IIIC programme*

The FLAPP operation has received a subsidy from the programme funds within the framework of the Community initiative programme INTERREG IIIC West Zone. INTERREG IIIC is an EU-funded programme that helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common projects. These projects enable regions to share knowledge and experience that will help them develop new solutions to economic, environmental and social challenges. 98 % of all European Union regions are involved in INTERREG IIIC projects. There are more than 250 INTERREG IIIC projects running involving 2500 local and regional actors from 50 countries; 20 % of these are from new EU Members. More info: [www.interreg3c.net](http://www.interreg3c.net)

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