

INBO World Basin Summit 2026

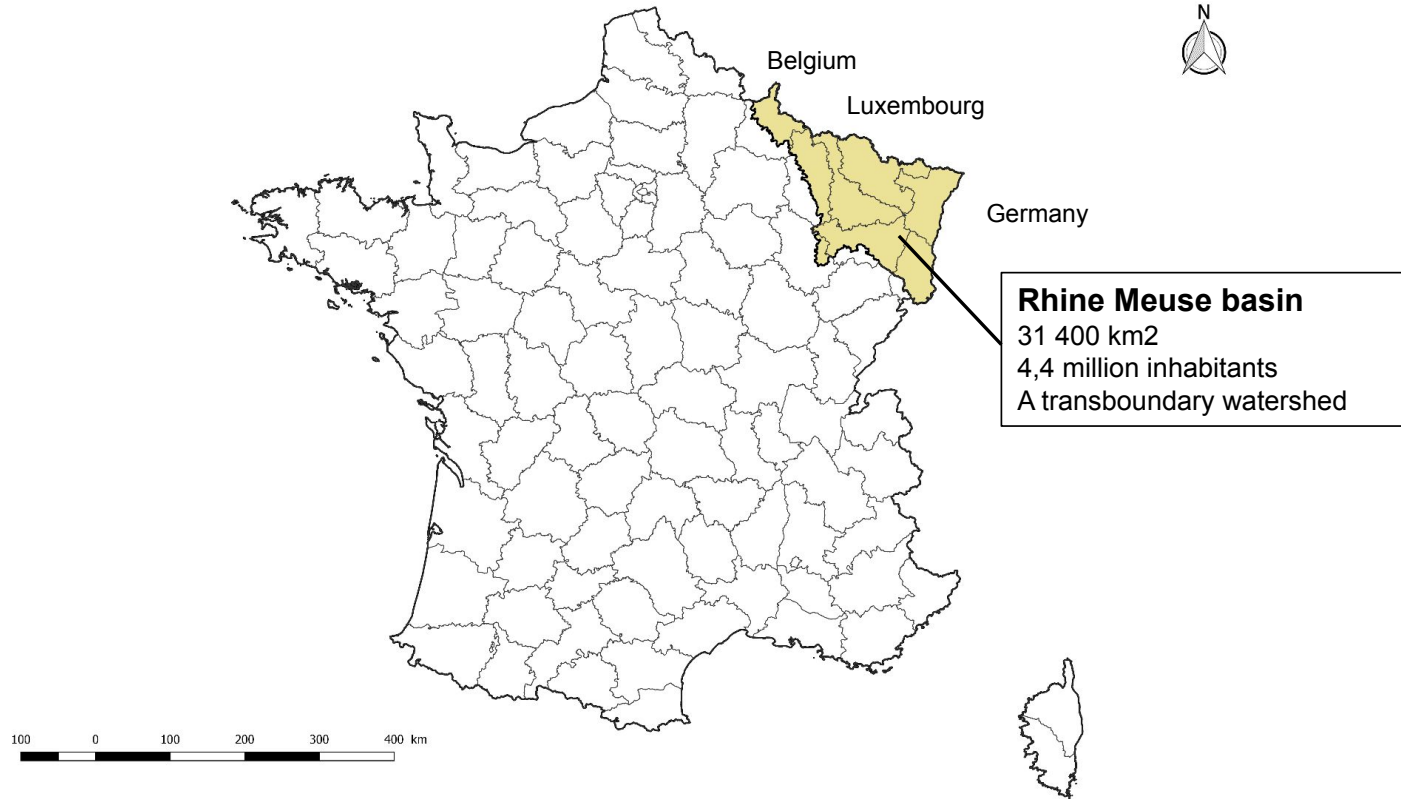
session 3 - BIODIVERSITY Healthy waters, resilient basins :
bringing consistency to water and biodiversity policies



Biodiversity at the heart of water management planning in the Rhine–Meuse River Basin

By Audrey Bardot – President of the Basin Committee

Geographical context of the Rhine–Meuse basin



Biodiversity at the core of the Rhine–Meuse Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and the climate adaptation/mitigation plan



Key elements of the Rhine–Meuse plans for biodiversity

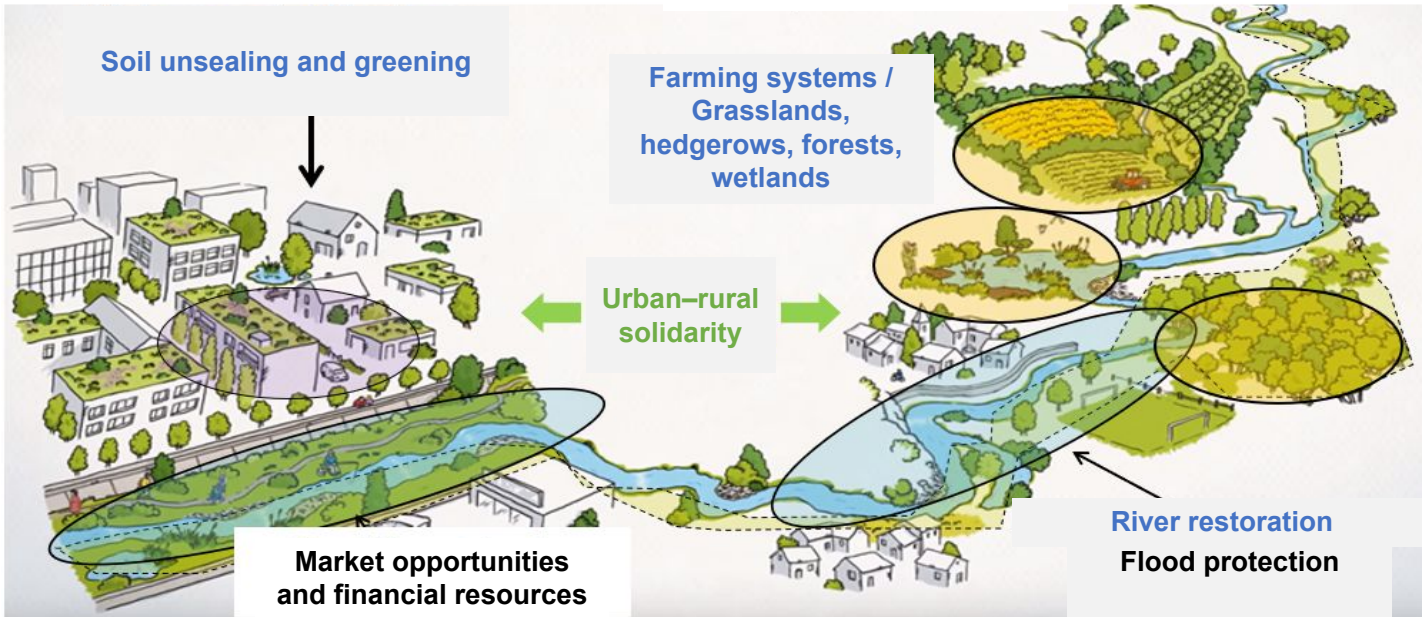
- **Promoting land-use planning that relies on nature-based solutions (NBS)** to enhance biodiversity which is our life assurance for the future
- **Ambitious restoration actions for aquatic ecosystems** at river basin scale, including river/ecological continuity
- **A major programme to maintain permanent grasslands** - high-biodiversity ecosystems that also protect water resources : the Grassland Plans

Promoting land-use planning that relies on nature-based solutions (NBS) to enhance biodiversity

Improving living conditions
(reduction of urban heat islands, etc.)

High-quality drinking water for all

High-quality, locally produced food



Soil unsealing and greening

Farming systems /
Grasslands,
hedgerows, forests,
wetlands

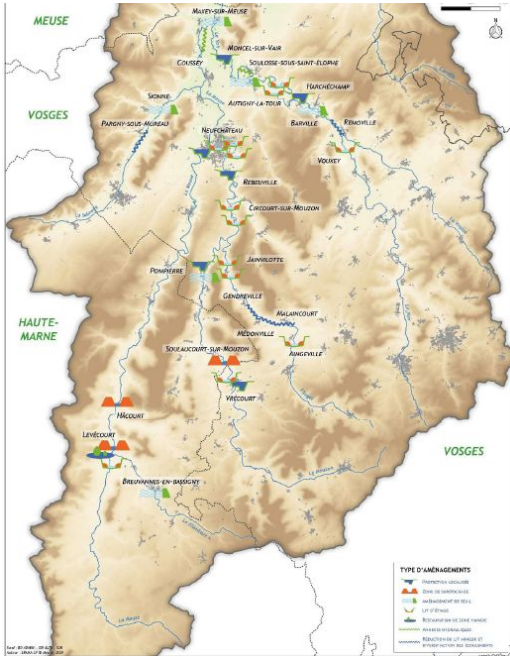
Urban-rural
solidarity

Market opportunities
and financial resources

River restoration
Flood protection

Ambitious restoration actions for aquatic ecosystems at river basin scale, including river/ecological continuity

Large-scale aquatic ecosystem restoration in the Meuse basin



> 41 restoration works across 29 sites : biodiversity supporting the WFD objective of 'good status' and flood risk reduction



Ambitious restoration actions for aquatic ecosystems at river basin scale, including river/ecological continuity

Large-scale aquatic ecosystem restoration in the Meuse basin

Restoring ecological/river continuity



Removal of a downstream weir



Weir and former sluice structure



Ambitious restoration actions for aquatic ecosystems at river basin scale, including river/ecological continuity

Large-scale aquatic ecosystem restoration in the Meuse basin

BEFORE



AFTER



Creating low-flow channels (secondary channels for low-water conditions)

Cost : € 20 millions

A major programme to maintain permanent grasslands - high-biodiversity ecosystems that also protect water resources : the Grassland Plans

Axis 1 : Technical support to livestock farmers

Axis 2 : Value farmers and grassland-based products

Axis 3 : Outreach



The Grassland Plans



Meuse Valley

- Permanent grasslands: the second largest biodiversity reservoir after forests in our region
- Protection of water against diffuse pollution pressures (nitrates, pesticides, phosphorus...)
- Example: nitrate concentrations < 10 mg/L where grazing density < 2.7 LSU/ha or N fertilisation < 200 kg N/ha
- Flood and drought regulation

The Grassland Plans



- Limiting carbon emissions
- Permanent grasslands can offset 30–80% of greenhouse gas emissions from grass-based livestock systems
- Grass-fed meat and milk : improved nutritional profile



**Thank you
for your attention**