

## Results of 7th IWA YWP Eastern European Conference Belgrade Serbia, September 2015

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The 7<sup>th</sup> IWA YWP Eastern European Conference held in September 2015 in Belgrade, was a wonderful opportunity for young and senior water professionals from many countries to meet in the White Town of Belgrade, the capital city of Serbia. Quite well documented is the history of Belgrade since the time of the Roman Empire in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century before Christ. It was its strategic position at the water mouth of the Sava River into the Danube to build the first fortress and the garrison town on the east side of the Sava River, later called Belgrade. As part of the Danube-Limes, the area prospered well on both side of the Sava River. After the split of the Roman Empire into its West and East part, the garrison town became the north-west border of the East Roman Empire. Because of its strategic location, a long and changeful history of several conquests between the Central-, East-, South- Europe and Ottoman forces begun, alternated with periods of building and trading. Up to today these unique cultural events made Belgrade a perfect host for young water professionals from all parts of Europe.



**120 young water professionals  
from countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and other countries  
7<sup>th</sup> IWA YWP Eastern European Conference, Belgrade, Serbia**

The rivers Sava and Danube unquestionable affect very much the townscape of Belgrade in topographic as well as in economic ways. The international cooperation with the adjoining states of the river systems is of great importance for Belgrade and Serbia as a midland. Most of the available water originates from upstream countries. The contamination of water is another important issue of international importance. Transition from a polluted city to a cleaner state and downstream rivers are one of the biggest goals of city managers and governments. Serbia is renewing its infrastructure for water preparation and water sanitation more and more. The uprising implementation of academic knowledge into practical

application is one part of the tasks to provide long term economic and ecologic sustainable solutions. Results of an effective international cooperation in the field of preservation are evident and once more a good reason for us to select Belgrade to host the 7<sup>th</sup> IWA YWP Conference.

The Conference provided a platform for young professionals and postgraduate researchers from Eastern Europe, CIS and other countries to present their work, research and innovations related to advances in water supply and sanitation, but also in water management in general. Besides, it was a good meeting point for young and senior water professionals. Young water professionals have a lot of questions and doubts when starting carrier, and they are sometimes discouraged by different ambient obstacles that emerge during their work future planning. The main objective was to bring together a broad range of stakeholders from the water sector in an effort to improve understanding of the interdependencies and develop a joint perspective on the common challenges. The conference focused its discussions on options and solutions as well as on enabling environments and incentives for cooperation.

The conference showcased innovative solutions and helped forge a common policy agenda to address the water sector next challenges and how to improve personal careers in it. The conference was designed to achieve this aim with the aid of a senior water professionals committee, which included experienced representatives of educational and research organizations, as well as both governmental and private companies active in the Eastern European water sector. The senior water professionals committee was very helpful in answering questions, solving doubts, directing young water professionals in solving problems, highlighting the importance of different activities, etc.



**This year Young Water Professionals participants from 20 countries presented their works and experiences**

The conference was attended by about 120 delegates representing 8 (South-)Eastern European countries, countries of Central Asia or South Africa, and also other European countries. The profiles of the participants were also as varied as they came from a broad

spectrum of organizations active in the water sector: universities, research institutions, water suppliers, municipalities, private companies or non-profit organizations.

59 oral and 23 poster presentations were selected by the Conference Program Committee to be presented at the Conference. The Conference sessions “Water management”, “Water supply” and “Wastewater treatment” together with the poster sessions covered a broad range of topics. The work and research of young water professionals in the water management area was focused on climate change impacts on the water resource and flooding protection as well as the physical, chemical and ecological status of surface and groundwater impacting water quality and quantity for agriculture and in drinking water usage. The Water supply sessions were connected by reaching these fields of topics. Here the water quality in the distribution system and its modelling, optimisation, observation and operation of the networks are the main points of interests. After the water is brought to the consumers, the question about treating the wastewater arises. The wastewater treatment sessions were focused on new developments in treatment of wastewater, urban run-off and the sludge treatment as final product of the wastewater cleaning process. Each session was followed up by an interactive discussion between the speakers, the members of the committee and the audience. At the end of the first conference day, a dialogue between young and senior water professionals was held, with the aim to provoke a debate and to obtain critical and constructive views from young and senior participants on career development and the importance of network connections in academic, administrative fields as well as in private enterprises.

The conference was closed by an award ceremony for the best presentation to Lavrnic S., Mancini M. from the University of Cadiz, Oficina de Erasmus Mundis, Campus de Puerto Real (Spain) for the oral presentation “Water Scarcity and Wastewater Reuse Standards in South Europe: Focus on Agriculture”. As best poster presentation was awarded Kowalska K., Felis E. from the environmental Biotechnology Department of Silesian University of Technology (Poland) for the presentation “Removal of Selected Corrosion Inhibitors by Activated Sludge in Biological Membrane Reactor (MBR)”.



**Award for the best platform presentation the winner is Lavrnic S. (Serbia / Spain)**

Numerous advantages of taking part in the 7<sup>th</sup> IWA YWP Conference, besides expanding knowledge and presenting current research and work are meeting people, travelling,

exchange of opinions and very important expanding personal professional network. The exchange of knowledge and learning from others and other countries' experiences are sometimes crucial for a deeper understanding of our own situation and practices. By sharing very similar historical and technical circumstances and having the same financial means, professionals obviously have a very close point of view about the problems of the sector.

The Conference was a good place to start innovative discussions and get new ideas. In the same time, this is a great way for Young Water Professionals to build their carrier on an international level. Giving presentations, meeting technical senior experts and learning about new achievements in their field of interest is a next step on the way to a successful water career – something every motivated Young Water Professional is seeking for.

Experience of the 7<sup>th</sup> IWA YWP Eastern European Conference has once again shown that young water professionals have benefited immensely from meetings and round-tables, enabling them to meet scientists with the same interests and consolidate. It is evident that a natural combination of new ideas of young specialists with the experience of well-known scientists is very fruitful. As a chairwoman of the Organising Committee I would like to thank all participants, members of the Program and Organising Committees and sponsors who contributed to the organisation of this Conference and transformed it to an extraordinary event.



**Conferences has included broad cultural program**



**Participants had networking opportunities during the conference sessions, but moreover during dinners with national Serbian kitchen.**

The 8<sup>th</sup> IWA YWP Eastern European Conference will take place in Gdansk, Poland, in 12-14 May 2016. The forthcoming conference is a special issue, whose logo is: "Leaving the Ivory Tower - Bridging the Gap between Academia, Industry, Services and Public Sector". Since Gdansk has a reputation for having a long academic history as well as being a modern and successfully growing city, it represents a perfect location for this event bridging academia and outstanding sectors. We are looking forward to the next 8<sup>th</sup> YWP IWA Eastern European Conference in Gdansk, which will be one more chance to meet again, for all of us who already attended previous Conferences and moreover to make new contacts and friends. We would like to encourage all young water professionals to take part in the IWA YWP Conferences, since this is a great chance to communicate with interesting people, to learn about new exciting ideas, to gain a lot of new experience, which will significantly facilitate your career in the future.