

# Source Water Protection on the Rhine: The Merits of a Joint Approach

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## Biographical Sketch of Author

**Dr Peter G Stoks** graduated from Nijmegen University, Netherlands, where he also took his PhD (1982). Following a post doctoral at Amsterdam Free University (Dept of Analytical Chemistry) he was appointed Head of the Analytical Laboratories at the Dutch Nat'l Water Authority RIZA. In 1991 he became Directory Board member & Head of the Water Quality Dep't of the WRK Water works, Nieuwegein, Netherlands. His special interests are water quality assessment strategies and Early warning. He is actively involved in the International Association of Water Works along the Rhine (IAWR), where he is a member of the Scientific Research Program Committee.

## Abstract

The Rhine river serves as a major drinking water source for well over 20 million people.

Also, there are huge industrial and (petro)chemical developments within the catchment area, and shipping traffic is highest in the world.

In order to watch over the public's interests regarding safe drinking water and to make a powerful gesture in transboundary matters regarding water quality, over 120 water works in the Rhine basin founded the International Association of Water works in the Rhine catchment area (IAWR). The IAWR strives towards a source water quality that permits relatively simple, natural treatment processes assuring safe and healthy drinking water.

This statement implies a healthy and ecologically sound river and, thus, a preventive protection of the resources.

RIWA / IAWR therefore focusses on water quality research and on ecological characteristics such as toxicity, species abundance and diversity.

Annual reports on the water quality monitoring network, as well as special reports on, e.g., priority pollutants are published and riparian governments as well as industry are confronted with these results. Periodically, a memorandum is published stating quality objectives and threshold values for the Rhine river which, if complied with, will ensure a safe drinking water quality using simple, natural treatment processes. Following several decades of "pressure group activism" the sound scientific basis of the arguments gradually made IAWR a respected NGO invited to formal national and international governmental forums. Over time this has led to the incorporation of drinking water interests into water policy plans, to a close cooperation with national and regional water authorities and to the reduction of emissions from industry as well as from agricultural run-off.