



SCHELDT
YOUTH
PARLIAMENT

-10 YEARS-

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Photo page 16-17 @ Yann Arthus-Bertrand / www.altitude-photo.com Het Zwin Knokke, Belgium
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INTRODUCTION

THE SCHELDT, A RIVER WITH MANY FACES

THE SCHELDT RISES NEAR THE VILLAGE OF GOUY LE CATELET

in northern France. The source is located on the Saint-Quentin plateau, 95 metres above sea level. The river flows through Wallonia, Flanders and the Netherlands, flowing out into the North Sea at Vlissingen.

Close to its source the Scheldt is just a brooklet. From the source all the way to Ghent, the river is known as the Upper Scheldt. The river is approximately 65 metres wide in Ghent. Between Ghent and Antwerp the Scheldt is a great river, with a width of 450 metres. This part is known as the Sea Scheldt and downstream of Antwerp it is known as the Western Scheldt. The Sea Scheldt and the Western Scheldt together form the Scheldt estuary, which is approximately 160 kilometres long. In this area the Scheldt and a number of its tributaries (Durme, Rupel, Greater and Lesser Nete, Dijle, Zenne and Dender) are subject to the tides and there is a mixture of freshwater and saltwater. The tide enters the estuary from the sea, penetrating deep into the interior: the river tides can be observed in Ghent. By Vlissingen, where the Scheldt is approximately five kilometres wide, more than a billion cubic metres of water flow in and out of the river twice a day. ...A billion cubic metres would fill 400,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The river is 350 kilometres long and large sections are canalized. More than 250 human-made dams and locks connect the different parts of the river, and its tributaries and canals. Upstream from Ghent the Scheldt is canalized for more than 138 kilometres.

Divided along its length, 31% of the Scheldt is located in France, 17% in Wallonia, 1% in Brussels, 43% in Flanders and 8% in the Netherlands. The river basin district is split over 10 river basins: Upper Schelde, Scheldt Estuary, Hene, Skarpe, Leie, Dender, Zenne, Dijle, Demer and Nete.

(Source: International Scheldt Commission)



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Inteiding Why set up a youth parliament for the Scheldt?

Water management in Europe had reached a low end in the late 1990s

The Scheldt was one of Europe's most polluted rivers. A lot of watercourses had been concreted over, dammed or straightened over the years. That had consequences, from greater flood risks to the loss of a flourishing abundance of flora and fauna. The challenges for the future grew ever larger and ever more complex with every day. There was a growing need for innovative ideas, initiatives and solutions and a growing realization that people once more have to feel a greater connection with the water as a common resource in their environment. But that is not all, because these are important prerequisites of the success of integral water management. As rivers do not care about national borders, international partnerships were urgently required.

The idea emerged to get young people more involved in water management. Various partnerships, such as the Scheldt Youth Parliament, give them the opportunity to get involved, meet each other, work on ideas together, express their opinion, study the water issues and the accompanying challenge and of course to present innovative water management solutions and campaigns now and in the future.

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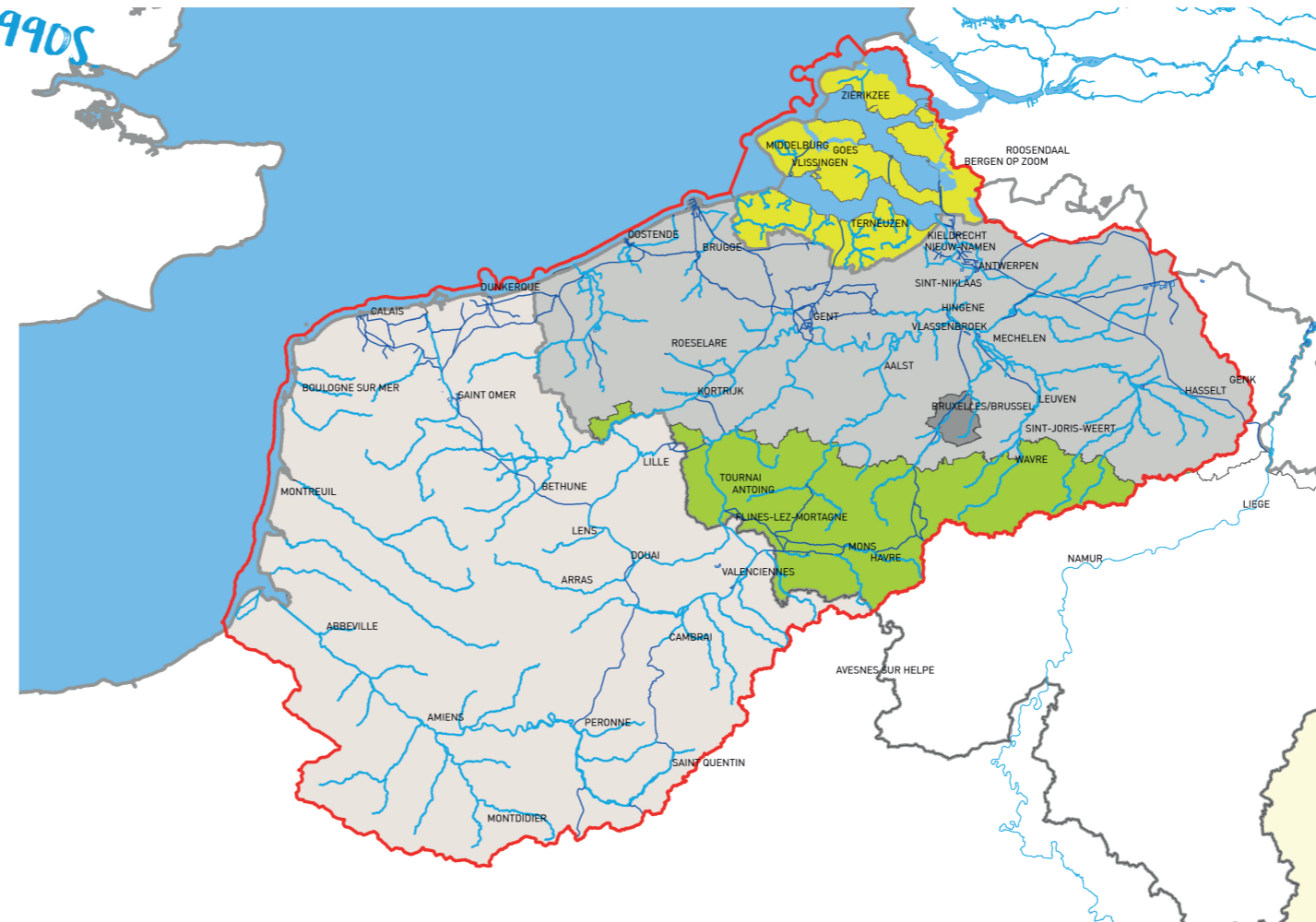
Over the past 40 years French water policy has changed from centralized, fragmentary management to a more local, integrated and participative approach. The activity was opened up to stakeholders, who were previously not involved. For example, we invited young people to actively participate in water management in their region.

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Olivier Thibault,
Artois-Picardie Water Agency

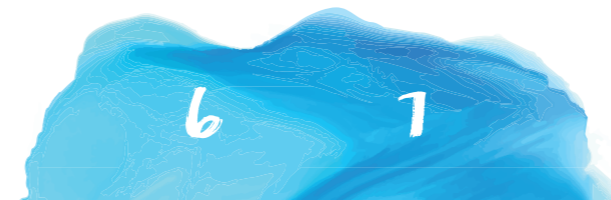
The Scheldt at a glance



- Surface area of the Scheldt river basin: 22.116 km²
- Surface area of the Scheldt river basin district: 36.416 km²
- Length of the Scheldt's main stem: 350 km, of which 138 km is canalized
- Elevation of the source: 95 m
- Highest point in the river basin: 212 m (Wallonia)
- Lowest point in the river basin: -2 m (Netherlands)
- Population in the Scheldt river basin district: 12.855.000 people
- Average population density in the Scheldt river basin district: 352 people/km²
- A daily water volume of 10 million m³ flows to the sea (an average flow of 115 m³/sec.)

(Source: ScaldWIN, an Interreg project for better water quality in the International Scheldt River Basin District, with all involved governments)

Map @ ISC (International Scheldt Commission)





Target Group: Who are the youth of the Scheldt?

The project targets young people aged 16-26 from France, Belgium and the Netherlands. The Scheldt Youth Parliament is not organized at country level, but follows the flow of the river: in this case, the International Scheldt river basin district. This region extends over the north of France, virtually the whole of Flanders, Brussels, part of Wallonia and the Dutch province of Zeeland.

The Scheldt Youth Parliament

A participative youth water project in the international Scheldt river basin district.

Goals

1. Increasing the involvement of young people in their region's water management. The Scheldt Youth Parliament fits in with the goals of public participation stated in the EU's Water Framework Directive (see page 10). Education and citizenship are two spearheads of this project. The Scheldt Youth Parliament coaches, guides and educates young people on the themes of water and water management. They are given opportunities to share knowledge, experience and views with each other. This enables them to grow into active citizens and (water) actors at local level and, by extension, at national and international level too.
2. Giving young people a strong voice in the formulation of policy. The Scheldt Youth Parliament builds bridges between young people, policymakers and society at large. It helps shape policy by means of bottom-up participation, based on its acquired knowhow and expertise. The voice of young people inspires policymakers to set up water and sustainability campaigns for wider social target groups through their networks.
3. Working together across borders. Young people can express their own opinions and put their own stamp on policy, independent of political systems. That facilitates working relationships and projects that span national borders, such as setting up youth parliaments in other river basins. And enables the young people of the Scheldt to help build a network of mutually reinforcing youth parliament organizations.

DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

Through the broad activities of the Scheldt Youth Parliament the young participants acquire competences that enrich their personal development and give them a strong position on the job market. A rundown of some of the things young people get out of participating in the project: critical mindset, boosts self-confidence, strengthens passion for enterprise, stimulates creativity, accentuates sense of responsibility, creates team spirit, develops leadership qualities and organizational skills, tolerance, shows solidarity, teaches understanding and respect in contacts with others, communication skills, solution-oriented thinking, improves foreign languages, tests negotiation skills and so on.

EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

One of the most important pieces of EU environmental legislation with regard to water is the Water Framework Directive. This directive, which came into force on 22 December 2000, sets out a uniform water policy for the whole of the European Union. The goal of the Water Framework Directive is to secure water stocks and water quality in the European Union and mitigate the consequences of flooding and droughts. The Water Framework Directive imposes an obligation on Member States to use water in a sustainable way. To this end, they must draw up management plans for each river basin, the natural geographical and hydrological unit. These river basin management plans contain targets and measures to create a good water system by no later than 2027.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Since 2015 the project subscribes to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations: an action plan to free people from poverty and put the planet back on the path of sustainability. The Scheldt Youth Parliament primarily works within Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



GENERAL OPERATION

The Scheldt Youth Parliament has had full-fledged observer status at the International Scheldt Commission since 2012 (see page 15). A delegation from the Scheldt Youth Parliament attends the annual plenary session of the International Scheldt Commission in December, where the delegates enter into dialogue with those responsible for policy in the five regions of the three countries. Artois-Picardie Water Agency and GoodPlanet Belgium, a public institution in France and an NGO from Belgium, joined forces to initiate, guide and support this participative youth project.



Preparation

Young people prepare for the plenary session by means of educational visits and local and international training and exchanges. This is a way for them to get acquainted with stakeholders, such as governments, businesses, ports and interest groups. They also examine current water-related themes.



Plenary session

The Scheldt Youth Parliament brings together young people every year to discuss the management and evaluation of this river basin. They enter into direct dialogue with those who are responsible for policy. It is not just a talking shop, however. These meetings also shape campaigns, such as 'Scheldt à la Carte' (see page 21).

GOODPLANET BELGIUM



GoodPlanet Belgium inspires young and old to create a sustainable society by undertaking positive campaigns and sharing expertise. The organization develops and guides projects, workshops and educational tools with regard to all sustainability themes. The 50 employees reach some 350,000 children, young people and adults throughout Belgium every year.

GoodPlanet is the Belgian partner in an international network set up by the famous French film director and photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand. This partnership creates new synergies: a strong message to inspire more and more people to work for a sustainable society, illustrated by Yann Arthus-Bertrand's impressive stills and moving images.

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When GoodPlanet was still known as GREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network) we played a pioneering role in setting up youth water parliaments. River basin parliaments, such as the Scheldt Youth Parliament, are a logical consequence of the youth activities that we initiate and guide at local level in Brussels and at European level. Working in accordance with natural boundaries, in this case river basins, is in our DNA.

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*Jo Van Cauwenberge,
director GoodPlanet*



Etablissement public du Ministère chargé du développement durable

ARTOIS-PICARDIE WATER AGENCY

The Artois-Picardie Water Agency is a public institution under the French minister of ecology and sustainable development. Six water agencies were set up in France in response to the French water law of 1964. The water agency is involved in implementing public policy on water and the aquatic environment. Since October 2000 this mission is part of the goals of the European Union's Water Framework Directive.

As a public utility, the agency contributes to reducing all kinds of water pollution and helps protect water and aquatic environments by providing financial aid, developing and collecting and deploying water data to increase knowledge, improve management and carry out evaluations.

The scope covers the whole territory of the northern departments and Pas de Calais, and parts of the departments of Somme, Aisne and Oise.

The Artois-Picardie Water Agency supports the Scheldt Youth Parliament and coordinates the Youth Parliament of the Artois-Picardie river basin in association with the French minister of education.

www.eau-artois-picardie.fr



INTERNATIONAL SHELDT COMMISSION

This intergovernmental institution for sustainable management of the Scheldt river basin district was created in the spirit of the EU Water Framework Directive. The commission brings together six partner states and regions from source to mouth of the Scheldt: France, Belgium and its three federal regions – Wallonia, Brussels-Capital Region and Flanders – and the Netherlands. The goal of these parties is to achieve sustainable, integrated management across the whole district by tackling critical challenges, be they quantitative (such as high water, floods and droughts) or qualitative (by working to create a good ecological situation and fighting pollution).

The commission is split into four working groups (coordination, hydrology, groundwater and surface water monitoring) and two project groups (calamitous pollution and the fish master plan).

www.isc-cie.org



A river basin like the Scheldt river basin needs the rejuvenating spirit of young people. Without prejudice and more used to working together than we adults are. The youth of the Scheldt show what young people can contribute to a society that is controlled by technology, where people are at risk of being pushed aside by all sorts of rules. Young people's enthusiasm, openness and ideas are refreshing. And in a time of climate change and water scarcity, everyone needs this.



Arnould Lefebure,
general secretary,
International Scheldt
Commission





10 YEARS OF THE SCHELDT YOUTH PARLIAMENT

HISTORY

1998 GoodPlanet (known at the time as GREEN) started working in the field of water, including the **Living with the Meuse and the Scheldt** project in association with GREEN Netherlands (now defunct) and the European River Network.

Final-year secondary school students across the river basin of our two great rivers took part in a local water-themed campaign/study, such as a report on a water study or the mapping of a management problem. 400 young people with the most inspiring projects in Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels and the Netherlands came together to share their experiences of sustainable water management in this river basin.

European Youth Water Parliament

This project raises awareness among young people of sustainable water management and the importance of citizen participation. The programme is extensive: debates with experts, case studies, workshops on project design and the creation of educational tools, intercultural activities and so on. Their involvement also gives young people insight into democratic processes, such as ratifying campaigns on the basis of debate and voting during plenary sessions or the election of representatives.

1999 The young participants in the Living with the Meuse and the Scheldt project attended the **first European Youth Water Parliament** in Espalion in the South of France.

GoodPlanet (GREEN) together with the NGO Solidarity Water Europe organized this assembly of 80 young people from 15 European countries, implementing an idea in the World Water Contract. For the first time, young people in Europe had the opportunity to play a role in water policy.

One of the ideas to come out of Espalion was to set up local water parliaments and a biannual European Youth Parliament. This led to the creation of the Brussels and the Wallonia Youth Water Parliament. The Artois-Picardie Water Agency took inspiration from these projects, setting up its own Youth Water Parliament. Local water management meetings were subsequently organized, bringing together these three youth parliaments. Brussels hosted a delegation from France and vice versa.

2006 – 2016

2001 The **second European Youth Water Parliament** was held in Barcs, Hungary.



2003 Geel, Belgium hosted 160 young people from 29 countries in SPLASH, the **third European Youth Water Parliament**.

The delegation travelled to Brussels in a specially chartered SPLASH train to talk with MEPs and representatives of the European Commission at the EU Parliament. Spurred on by young delegates, the challenges in the EU Water Framework Directive were discussed, along with international cooperation. It was an innovative meeting for the water sector at the time, as there was little cooperation between departments with water-related responsibilities within the European Commission. This was also the first time young people from outside Europe (including Morocco, South Africa and Brazil) took part. The idea to work on the basis of individual river basins grew from this and previous local meetings between youth parliaments in France and Belgium.

START OF THE SCHELDT YOUTH PARLIAMENT

2006 River basin parliaments become reality

Eighty young people from the International Scheldt River basin district travelled for the first time to the source of the Scheldt in northern France. There they laid the foundations for cooperation between the youth of the Scheldt, discussing the various goals of the Scheldt Youth Parliament in four distinct committees.

The young people proposed convening Scheldt Meetings every four years at locations along the course of the river, from the source to the mouth at Vlissingen. In these meetings the delegates are given relevant information to prepare themselves for the debates with politicians and policymakers.

2007 Scheldt meetings strengthen relationships

The youth of the Scheldt gathered in Wez-Velvain on the border between France and Belgium. They agreed to travel to the venue without using private motorised vehicles: by bike, public transport, on foot or even by skateboard. These meetings strengthened the relationships between them and increased their motivation to develop projects together. Artois-Picardie Water Agency, GoodPlanet and the International Scheldt Commission officially signed the partnership.

2008 Charter, action plan and first plenary session of the Scheldt Youth Parliament

The third Scheldt meeting was held in Kieldrecht on the border between Belgium and the Netherlands. The participants visited the Drowned Land of Saeftinghe, an area of outstanding natural beauty and the largest brackish marsh in Europe. This and other activities and training courses gave the young people the input they needed to prepare the following documents:

- A charter of shared values and political demands, functioning as a social declaration by the Scheldt Youth Parliament and a starting point for further cooperation.
- An action plan for the coming three years.

On 14 and 15 October 2008 the Scheldt Youth Parliament held its first plenary session for all young people in the Scheldt river basin district within the framework of the University of Antwerp's 'Water and Climate Change' project. It was an ideal opportunity to enter into a dialogue with scientists and policymakers. It was here too that the charter and the action plan were presented. These documents would further shape the water and sustainable development project activities of the Scheldt Youth Parliament.

ACTION PLAN 2009-2011

- During the plenary session in Antwerp, the parliament stated that it wanted to study eco-tourism, sustainable enterprise and other topics in more depth.
- Water studies were conducted everywhere, but the various local authorities employed different methods, which makes it hard to compare results. The parliament wanted to tackle this problem. The first plenary session of the Scheldt Youth Parliament gave the green light for the development of a GIS (Geographic Information System) database and the subsequent related Scheldt à la Carte project.

Scheldt à la Carte was a cross-border water study based on the same parameters. in association with secondary schools. The school students monitored the quality of watercourses in their area and entered their results into the GIS database. Two parameters were measured: the biotic index and the nitrate content. A guide provided support to the participating teachers. The results were shown on a map. Among other things, the young people used this tool to raise water quality within the International Scheldt river basin district with policymakers and relevant bodies during the plenary session in 2014. This project was an opportunity to monitor the EU Water Framework Directive. In Scheldt à la Carte the parliament also wanted to inspire policymakers to following its lead.

- The Scheldt'Art project is initiated in 2008 during the first plenary session of the Scheldt Youth Parliament. The aim of the project is to promote the heritage of the river basin and introduce young people to this in a creative way in a competition.



2009 Fourth international Scheldt meeting at the mouth in Vlissingen, Netherlands

In the spring the youth of the Scheldt crossed the final border at the mouth of the Scheldt. The central theme was economics, because shipping and international trade play an important role at the mouth of a river.

In the autumn a group of enthusiastic youth of the Scheldt gathered for the fifth time, now in the bay of the Somme in northern France, where they compared the charter and the action plan to the actual situation. The participants expressed the view that sustainable water consumption is about more than management alone. As far back as their first plenary session in Antwerp in 2008 they had stated that they wanted to work on sustainable tourism and sustainable enterprise, among other things. In practice, they visited *Parc du Marquenterre*, a fine example of ecotourism. While crossing the bay the young people saw how this valuable eco-system was threatened by silting. At the private company Ecover they saw how trade can go hand in hand with sustainable water consumption.

Water Youth Congress in Istanbul, Turkey

GoodPlanet was a partner of the Water Youth Congress held during the World Water Forum in Turkey. Five youth of the Scheldt were there to share their experiences with an international audience. By way of preparation the young people came together at 'Bridges to Istanbul', a meeting in the Belgian senate in association with water NGO Protos. During this session, the young people approved seven recommendations they would take with them to Istanbul.

2010 International Water Messengers Days in Brussels, Belgium

Over three preparatory days around a thousand young Europeans shared their experiences on the themes of water, biodiversity, international cooperation, climate change, human rights and water consumption in daily life. In November they came together at the Atomium in Brussels for the 'WATER for ALL, ALL for WATER' campaign. Two thousand children and young people from schools in Brussels, as well as France, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Greece and Italy broadcasted their water messages to the wide world. The plenary session of the Scheldt Youth Parliament was also held during this international event. The water messages also got through to the attending policymakers. From this meeting the idea grew for a project to share the messages worldwide.

In 2010 the youth of the Scheldt were also represented at the *first European Youth Water Summit*, held at the European Parliament in Brussels.



2011 10th EYPW in Arnhem and Preparation of the World Youth Water Parliament in Douai, France

A delegation of the Scheldt Youth Parliament took part in the 10th European Youth Parliament for Water in Arnhem, the Netherlands. The debate topics were water quality, water capacity and water safety.

Preparations were made for the first World Youth Parliament for Water during the international meeting in Douai, among other things during a day of reflection on an inland vessel. The young people got the World Youth Parliament for Water symbolically underway by mixing together water brought from their own region and pouring it into the local river, the Scarpe, which itself would flow down to the Scheldt.

They made a fresco on the theme of water, which they took to Marseille as a flag to clearly mark young people's presence at the World Water Forum. The art was later given a home at the offices of the Artois-Picardie Water Agency.



2012 The first World Youth Parliament for Water in Marseille, France

Together with the International Secretariat for Water and the Artois-Picardie Water Agency, GoodPlanet hosted the first World Youth Parliament for Water during the sixth World Water Forum in Marseille. A delegation from the Scheldt Youth Parliament attended. The Belgian Scheldt delegate Bart Devos was elected to chair the World Youth Parliament for Water.

Meeting weekend in Brussels

Later that year the Schelde youth came together during meeting days in Brussels. During this weekend, youth of the Scheldt from France and Belgium met to formulate goals. They went on a Brussels canal trip, highlighting the industrial built heritage connected with the presence of water in the city.

WORLD YOUTH PARLIAMENT FOR WATER

This active network of young people with a passion for water comprises more than 80 young people from 71 countries. We wish to promote youth participation in the water sector through concrete campaigns. The World Youth Parliament for Water is active at local, regional and international level. Campaigns on the right to water and sanitation is the focus at the local level. At global level they fight for recognition for the role of young people in the water sector at such institutions as the United Nations.

www.pmje-wypw.org

2013 – TRANS-BORDER RELATIONS STRENGTHENED

World Water Day in the Netherlands

The youth of the Scheldt took part in World Water Day in the Netherlands, where they helped shape the programme by reporting on their experiences during the scheduled conferences.

11th European Youth Parliament for Water in Armenia

That year the Youth of the Scheldt were also represented at the European Youth Parliament for Water in Armenia, where the central theme was water governance. Anna Kalaschova of the Scheldt Youth Parliament was elected as vice-chair. In the autumn they presented the concluding statement and the activities of the Scheldt Youth Parliament to the Flemish Parliament's Environment Committee in Brussels.

1st Scheldt'Outing in Hungary

The Scheldt flows through a densely populated area and has been changed and defined as a watercourse by human intervention. The idea developed to compare this situation through active exploration of natural and unspoilt rivers to gain inspiration for improving the water management of the Scheldt. In 2013 a delegation of youth of the Scheldt navigated part of the Drava river in the Danube-Drava National Park in Hungary by kayak as part of 'Scheldt'Outing'. They examined the local water culture in more depth and looked for similarities and differences with regard to the water policy in the Scheldt river basin district. The young people were given the opportunity to compare their findings and experiences of the previous year with locals. This international exchange added a new dimension to the Scheldt Youth Parliament: the network was enlarged and relations between the young people strengthened.

Dostrade, a future for the Upper Scheldt

The aim of this project was to develop a sustainable, integrated international vision for the Upper Scheldt (Cambrai to Gavere) and an Interreg IVA (France-Wallonia-Flanders) project. The future vision up to 2030 is as follows: development of the trans-border Valley of the Upper Scheldt into a hospitable, dynamic, interdependent cultural region with the Scheldt as central blue/green connecting axis between the regions, municipalities and cities. Creating partnerships between the Valley and adjacent regions and river valleys based on a study, workshops, roundtables and visits on the ground. The primary role of the Scheldt Youth Parliament was networking and participation in days of reflection.

www.dostrade.eu



2014 – A NEW APPROACH

Plenary session in Tournai, Belgium

Plenary session in Tournai, Belgium The Scheldt Youth Parliament launched a new multi-phase approach in association with schools on the core theme of blue/green networks. This began with an introductory workshop in the classroom. The young people were tasked with conducting a SWOT analysis on water in their own region. They presented their results during the two preparatory days in Tournai, primarily with young people from France and Belgium. They identified similarities and differences, and looked for ways to improve each other's situation together. During the plenary session they presented their recommendations for tackling weaknesses and threats. The young delegates returned home with concrete ideas for water campaigns in their own region.

12th EYPW and preparation of the World Youth Water Parliament in Douai

In December 2014 the youth of the Scheldt also took part in the preparatory meeting of the World Youth Parliament for Water in Douai. A bike activity was held on the market square to raise funds for youth water projects. In total 16,000 euros were raised by 400 enthusiastic sponsored participants who covered the equivalent of 1800 kilometres on 40 spinning bikes. The proceeds went to five water projects, including three Young Water Solutions project initiatives in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso.

2nd Scheldt'Outing in Slovakia

In 2014 the second edition of the Scheldt'Outing exchange project was held in Slovakia. The young people wanted to find out how to build water infiltration areas to combat floods, how to restore groundwater layers, how to infiltrate rainwater and so on. In other words, how nature could help us combat floods and what the various complex links between water and climate are. Local partner *Ludia a Voda* was an expert in this field. The young people were exposed to founder Michal Kravcik's alternative view on climate change. The debates were heated and new insights were acquired. In various trips the young people got to know the landscape of the Danube river basin. They built a small dam to prevent flooding. The links between climate and water became increasingly clear not only in theory but also in practice. At the end of the week local governments and interest groups came together to listen to the young people's impressions and experiences.



Sharing expertise within the context of the Pacco test

On the request of the city development organization City Mine(d), the Scheldt Youth Parliament was involved in developing the Pacco test and a water analysis project in Brussels. This test does not simply involve surface water measurements, it is also a smart tool that enables the water in the city to express itself. The Pacco test can point up changes to the water, explain the reason for these changes, show the risks and suggest action to anticipate or minimize these risks. www.paccotest.org

Artois-Picardie Youth Parliament for Water

In 2014 Morgan Lefévère, a youth of the Scheldt, was elected to chair the Artois-Picardie region's Youth Parliament for Water.



2015 – STRONG YEAR FOR YOUTH OF THE SCHELDT

Plenary session in the Belgian senate

A thousand young people met each other in the Brussels Senate at the federal Parliament, for a plenary session of the Scheldt Youth Parliament. They shared their recommendations with the attending politicians and policymakers. They also visited the Water Awareness 2015 Solutions exhibition. The idea for this GoodPlanet project was put forward during the International Water Messenger Days in 2010. The exhibition brought together (more than) 2015 solutions, campaigns and messages of water heroes from around the world, including the youth of the Scheldt. Two thousand children and young people gathered in the Royal Park opposite the building after their *Walk for Water* as part of World Water Day. They presented thousands of solutions to the Belgian vice-premier and minister of development cooperation.

2th World Youth Parliament for Water sets its stamp on the World Water Forum in South Korea

Seventy young people from around the world came together at the seventh World Water Forum in South Korea. The young people were able to voice their opinions due to the efforts of chair Bart Devos and the other young participants of the World Youth Parliament for Water. After three years in the chair, Belgian Bart Devos passed the torch to Morocco's Asma Bachikh.



EscoutSchelde 2013

The Scheldt Youth Parliament would be the youth activity of the EscoutSchelde 2013 project. The goal of this project was to unite all organizations, cities, municipalities and other initiatives around the Scheldt. www.escout2013.eu

Big Jump Challenge in Brussels

During the summer the Scheldt Youth Parliament took part in the final meeting of the Big Jump Challenge, the youth section of the Big Jump campaign. This initiative was based on a simple concept: at 3 pm on every second Sunday in July citizens from across Europe would jump in the water to back up their demand for clean water. During this meeting, young people from the whole of Europe presented their local water projects and campaigns in a creative way. The river ambassadors of the Youth Network for River Action worked together on a youth manifesto for water protection, which they presented to the European Parliament. www.bigjumpchallenge.net

3th Scheldt'Outing along the Sebou river in Morocco

For this third international Scheldt'Outing the youth of the Scheldt travelled to the river basin of the Sebou river in Morocco. They wanted to spread the positive dynamic of cooperation between young people and policymakers to river basins in other parts of the world. To that end they were in contact with stakeholders from the international river basin of the Danube and the national river basin of the Sebou in Morocco. The Sebou wrestles with various problems, including water pollution. The visitors travelled from the source in the Middle Atlas Mountains to where the river flows into the Atlantic Ocean. Step by step they gathered information about the state of the river, together with a delegation of young Ukrainian people and young locals from very diverse networks over the whole Sebou river basin. On the way they visited dams, irrigation projects for agricultural cooperatives and the water purification station in Fez. Stakeholders, including universities, various organizations and the Sebou river basin water agency inspired the young people to take action themselves. Together they designed a poster to raise awareness throughout the river basin. In turn, the youth of the Scheldt inspired the Moroccan partners to set up a local youth parliament for the Sebou, *l'Assemblée des Jeunes de l'Oued Sebou*.

Escout Grandeur Nature

The aim of the European *Fleuves Grandeur Nature* project was to develop innovative tools to increase knowledge of river basins and the challenges facing water management. The Scheldt Youth Parliament played the role of educational expert in this project and put itself forward as a candidate to test the tool. It provided a great representation of the Scheldt with methodologies that could be used in the classroom. The Scheldt young people use this tool in a project they are currently developing.

2016 – The INTERNATIONAL NETWORK REACHES OUT

13th European Youth Parliament for Water in Switzerland

Three youths of the Scheldt travelled to Switzerland for the European Youth Parliament for Water, where they immersed themselves in the theme of risk control and floods. Claire Pace from Malta was elected as new chair, while vice-chair Ismael Lagmiri was from the Scheldt river basin (Vlissingen). He would also attend the COP22 in Morocco in the autumn.

International Eco school in Duinkerke, France

As well as Belgian, French and Dutch youths, this time youths from the Sebou river basin in Morocco and youths from the Danube river basin in Bulgaria were also invited. Together they drew up recommendations for presentation at the 22nd climate summit later in the year.

Berlin Summer Camp, Germany

Four youths of the Scheldt took part in the Berlin Summer Camp organized by the Youth Network for River Action. This meeting brought together young activists from throughout Europe. The central theme – bathing in city rivers – was a nod to the 40th anniversary of the EU Bathing Water Directive.

Summer school in Burgas, Bulgaria

Four youths of the Scheldt river basin studied lake silting in more detail. This meeting brought together Belgian, Dutch, French and Bulgarian youths in Burgas on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.

COP22 in Marokko

Three youths of the Scheldt river basin took the recommendations of the Eco School in Duinkerke to the climate summit in Marrakesh. The youth parliament of the Sebou river basin district, *the Assemblée des jeunes de l'Oued Sebou*, was officially inaugurated there. The youths of the Scheldt river basin and the Moroccan youths signed an agreement laying the foundations for the partnership. This helped achieve an agreement between the Artois-Picardie and Sebou river basin water agencies. As such, the Scheldt Youth Parliament had a major impact at system level.



Assemblée des Jeunes de l'Oued Sebou

The Sebou is one of Morocco's most polluted rivers. In response, an initiative was launched to encourage youths of the Sebou river basin district to get involved in the protection of their water stocks through a youth parliament. The project provides a framework within which youths with a shared passion for water and water management can come together.

The participants formulated three main goals:

1. Encouraging youths of the Sebou river basin district to get involved in water policy.
2. Spreading their ideas about sustainable water management.
3. Setting up campaigns to raise awareness among other youths in the region about the challenges relating to the protection of local water stocks.



YOUTHS OF THE SCHELDT RIVER BASIN IN ACTION

As well as the policy component and the international meetings, the participating youths and schools were also active at local, national and international level. They set up their own projects, individually or with others. A selection of high-profile examples are presented in this chapter.



STEP BY STEP:

awareness-raising water workshops in primary schools

Step by Step is a project designed and implemented by the delegation of the Scheldt Youth Parliament that took part in the European Youth Parliament for Water in 2013 in Armenia. They developed an educational course on the theme of water in the Scheldt river basin for primary school classes. The youths designed a logo, contacted interested schools, stakeholders in the water sector and potential financiers. They secured a grant through the 'Youth in Action' call for projects by the JINT, the Flemish coordination body for international exchange and cooperation for young people and youth organizations. They also organized a training weekend for the other youths of the Scheldt river basin participating in this project.

The first phase of their project was carried out in association with two schools in Flanders. There were three meetings with the students. First the students were introduced to the theme of water in a fun workshop. They then went on a trip to Hidrodoe, an educational centre on the theme of water. Lastly, the young participants from the various schools came together to exchange their thoughts in the presence of the mayor.

This concept inspired youths of the Scheldt river basin in the Netherlands and plans were made for a second edition.



SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ACQUIRE EXPERTISE IN SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

In 2010 fifth-year students at the Provincial Technical Institute in Zottegem conducted a water audit for the town authorities, the Public Centre for Social Welfare and the social housing companies on the request of the Scheldt Youth Parliament and Rotary Zottegem. The goal was to identify where and how water consumption might be cut. The students put together a water audit for hot, cold, waste and rainwater. During the first stage of the project they presented their theoretic advice to the stakeholders. In the second phase they tested their results in practice in a number of homes in Zottegem. They rolled up their sleeves to carry out minor repairs where needed. Lastly, the students travelled to Romania with two other technical and vocational schools to share their expertise and discuss the theme with other youths.

STUDENTS MONITOR WATER POLLUTION ALONG DERELICT INDUSTRIAL ESTATES ON THE SCHELDT

This research project was conducted in 2012 by students of ISA Lille, a university college with research and expertise centre specialised in agriculture and food, environment and landscape. They examined risks and opportunities in four specific areas (industrial estates, manufacturing, parks, forests) on the Scheldt. As a conclusion of the study successful remediation projects were put forward to serve as a basis for a solutions database.

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDIES THE POSSIBILITY OF HARNESSING TIDAL CURRENTS TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY

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At school we were asked to set up a project for a business or a foundation. We opted for a tidal energy generation project under the supervision of the Scheldt Youth Parliament. We were invited to present our findings and ideas at the plenary session at the senate in Brussels along with many other youths who presented their own proposals and solutions. The Scheldt Youth Parliament was happy with the results. Not long after, it invited us to the Scheldt Outing in Morocco. We were working on a new water purification project for school by then. The Sebou river we were going to visit is highly polluted, so we felt it would be a good idea to acquire more knowledge and experience there.

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Corné Den Haan of the Goese Lyceum in the Netherlands (2015)

YOUNG WATER SOLUTIONS: YOUTHS WORLDWIDE TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION IN THEIR REGION

Many youths want to take action and conduct projects to provide their area with water and sanitation. However, it is often impossible for them to secure the funds they need to conduct their projects. People are sceptical about the feasibility, youths are not eligible for financial aid for administrative reasons and sponsors are hard to recruit because the youths do not have demonstrable experience. That all means that a great deal of potential is wasted, because these youths certainly have the skills and sense of responsibility needed to successfully implement projects.

With that in mind, youths at the Scheldt Youth Parliament and the World Youth Parliament for Water took the decision to provide a mechanism to solve this problem: Young Water Solutions. As a type of fund, Young Water Solutions makes financial resources (between 1000 and 10,000 euros) available to youths that want to decide their own destiny and conduct concrete water projects. This enables the youths to improve the lives of citizens by providing access to water and sanitation. It is also a unique opportunity for them to prove themselves while gaining practical experience. Basically, Young Water Solutions ensures that the many enthusiastic young people who want to take action and have honed strong ideas on water and sanitation are able to get to water.

Youths who receive financial support from Young Water Solutions are given guidance during the implementation and evaluation of the project. Our experts check the technical side of the project and ensure it is conducted in a sustainable, effective way.

For example, two water pumps were repaired in Wara (Burkina Faso), where local youths were involved and trained. Activities were then initiated in the very north of Burkina Faso to protect an oasis in the Sahel region and improve the organization of local water consumption. One youth from Bangladesh, Sajid Iqbal, was given the means to develop an affordable local irrigation system driven by solar energy.

After the launch in 2014 Young Water Solutions were faced with two major challenges: growing into a broad-based, solidly founded initiative and launching new projects. During the April 2015 World Water Forum in South Korea 16 founding members from around the world signed the founding deed of Young Water Solutions.

www.youngwatersolutions.org

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In 2010 I registered for a water debate at the Scheldt Youth Parliament in the senate. I was 17 at the time. It was not the theme that particularly interested me, but the fact that the girl I was interested in was also taking part. Before I knew it I was part of the Belgian delegation to the World Water Forum in Istanbul. I developed a huge interest in water and in 2012 I was elected to the chair of the World Youth Parliament for Water. I now have my own organization that gives young people worldwide the opportunity to set up drinking water projects in their own region. That one debate, that one opportunity I got through GoodPlanet, has changed my life hugely.



Bart Devos, youth of the Scheldt, Chair of the World Youth Parliament for Water (2012-2015) and founder of Young Water Solutions

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Scheldian Coralie Verhaege discovered the WYPW through the Scheldt Youth Parliament. She is member of the international Young Water Solutions team.

www.youngwatersolutions.org

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My adventure in water and sustainable development really started when GoodPlanet visited my school to make a presentation on the Brussels Youth Parliament for the Environment. Brussels youths came together on various meeting days to envision Brussels as a sustainable city. After this initial introduction to sustainability, I was given the opportunity to take part in other GoodPlanet projects. For example, since taking part in the World Youth Parliament for Water I have been a member of the Young Water Solutions team. In September 2015 I went to Morocco with the Scheldt Youth Parliament. Youths from Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Ukraine and Morocco gathered for an exchange on the theme of water. The attendees acquired insight into their local water problems and the problems others are wrestling with. We learned how water management differs from country to country. We also realized that, as well as financial resources, culture also plays an important role in the various ways problems are tackled. A few years ago I could never have imagined that I would have the opportunity to meet so many people that are working passionately with water, the challenge of this century, and that I would learn so much about how (unfair) the world is. GoodPlanet has given me the opportunity to develop my feeling for ecology and opened more doors than I could ever have dreamed of. Thank you for everything.

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