Wandering through Provence countryside – WADI visits SCP's water network

As spring slowly peeped out while snow still covered the cherry flowers in SCP's headquarters, the WADI project's consortium planned the activities of the next months and explored the area where the airborne water leak detection method will be tested this summer

On March 21st and 22nd, the WADI partners gathered in Le Tholonet, France, hosted by Société du Canal de Provence (SCP) to discuss about the technical progress of the project and the challenges ahead as WADI will enter a crucial phase in the months to come. The flights to validate its innovative airborne water leak detection system are expected to take place by early July. The results of the campaign will lay the basis for further development and improvement of WADI's technique.

After a day of hard work and discussions, the consortium was invited to see SCP's control room, where the whole water network is monitored constantly to ensure a prompt intervention in case of malfunctions or any other issues that may arise.

On the second day and in conjunction with the International Water Day, the consortium took the chance to visit some of SCP's numerous plants to see first-hand how its water management system operates.

The Canal de Provence supplies water to the whole Provence Region. Through a network composed of 70 km of open canals, more than 140 km of underground galleries and nearly 5,000 km of supply piping it brings water to approximately 2 million people located in 165 towns and villages, 17,000 companies, 6,000 farmers and 37,000 individuals.

SCP is involved actively in ensuring a reliable water supply for all users - whether they would be private individuals, agricultural facilities or industries – while maintaining sustainability, reducing water losses and minimising energy consumption in the process. Driven by these objectives, SCP provides its expertise to the WADI project and offers its water transmission network along with EDIA in the Portuguese region of Alqueva as pilot site where the airborne water leak detection surveillance service will be tested.

As the first leg of the tour, the partners visited the pumping station located in Brue-Auriac. The area is a perfect place to visit as it also hosts an air pump that can be used as access point for acoustic water leak detection equipment and a delivery point for farmers with a pressure reducer that gets activated in case the amount of water drawn from the network exceeds the amount agreed by the farmer in the contract with SCP.

Afterwards, they went on to the water treatment station in Saint Maximin, where water gets filtrated at a speed of approximately 18 litres per second. Here raw water undergoes several processes to remove contaminants and other undesirable components. The station contains a pump for the injection of WAC coagulant, sand filters, spiral cases for filter wash water and for treated water, a chlorination station and an electrolyser.

The tour ended with a panoramic view of the valley below Saint Maximin, which will put the efficacy of WADI's technique to the test as it allegedly contains a leak no one has been able to find yet. Will WADI be up to the challenge? Follow the hashtag #WADItech on Twitter to find out!