



## **60 second interview | *Harro Bode***

**Prof Dr.-Ing Harro Bode**  
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**Harro Bode** is the CEO of Ruhrverband (Ruhr River Association), which is responsible for the entire water quality and quantity management in the catchment of the River Ruhr (8 reservoirs, 60 municipalities, 80 sewage treatment plants, 530 stormwater storage and treatment facilities and 1200 employees).

He is a civil engineer by education and was awarded the very prestigious "Karl-Imhoff-Price" in 1986 for his PhD thesis (given by the German Water Association (DWA)). In 1999, he was appointed as "Honorary Professor" by the University of Hannover.

Harro Bode joined IWA when it was still IAWPRC in 1984 and since then has served in a variety of different functions. Today he is a member of the IWA Executive Committee and Governing Board; chairman of the IWA Specialist Group on "Design, Operation and Costs of Large Wastewater Treatment Plants" and chairs the German IWA National Committee in addition to many other functions within the German water sector.

- *What do you consider to be the most significant recent change in your field of expertise to have occurred in the last 10 years?*

Water management from the point of view of an engineer has changed to more multi- and interdisciplinary work than in former times. Although involving natural scientists, economists, lawyers etc. has a long tradition in engineers' work, there is a more diversified decision making process now with the need for transparency to all parties participating. This results in a good portion of formalistic work for organization, coordination, documentation etc., and sometimes in "red tape". On the other hand we find good progress in learning methods, mechanisms, impacts during recent decades so our work may be more goal-oriented and efficient than in former times.

A more technical change to be mentioned is the availability of membrane technology. This innovation has led to new developments in the sector.

- *What do you consider to be the most significant future challenge that professionals must deal with in the next 10 years?*

Water management is an essential element of infrastructure, environmental protection and sustainable development on a local, regional and global scale. Future challenges depend very much on the specific scale one adopts. In Germany, a land with an abundance of water, trace pollutants and compounds created by society will be in the focus of at least the next 10 years. For all problems dealing with water, reliable solutions must be developed, and politicians and decision-making parties must be convinced of these measures. A key aspect for this process is the economy in relation to the targets aspired. We have to make more efforts to communicate the necessity of this work, the efficiency of the measures proposed and the reliability of our expertise.

If one thinks about the question more in the light of the global scale, the answer is different, of course. Water shortages, climate change, problems of hygiene and heavy pollution are the priorities. Solutions are mostly of local or regional nature. Normally there are no global 'recipes'.

- *Whom do you consider to be the leading expert in your field, outside of your own organization, and why?*

Although it is difficult to nominate a single person according to my opinion one of the leading experts in the field of water management is Prof. Helmut Kroiss from Vienna Technical University. He combines expertise as an engineer and natural

scientist, experiences in evaluation of deficits and feasibility and a balanced strategic perspective.

- *Which report, product or service from your organization deserves more attention and why?*  
The "Ruhrgütebericht" (Ruhr quality report) is an annual report initiated in 1973, and issued by RUHRVERBAND and the water works in the catchment area of the River Ruhr. This report highlights the efforts and success in water management for an entire river basin of nearly 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It contains not only yearly comparisons of the local development but also features special chapters of broad interest to the world of water. Additionally RUHRVERBAND reports annually on water quantity management ("Ruhrwassermengenbericht") with valuable information on current meteorological, hydrological and operational data for the system of reservoirs in the catchment. These reports are available in the German language only. The expertise of RUHRVERBAND staff can be deployed for water management solutions for outside the RUHRVERBAND area. Experiences from our work can be extrapolated to other regions on a larger scale than has been the case to date.
- *In what ways would you like to see IWA change in the next 5 years?*  
I personally wish IWA luck and success in gaining more members worldwide. This applies to individual as well as to corporate members (with a main focus on utilities). By the wealth of conferences, workshops and seminars IWA is offering, it should be possible to draw a broader and even more intense attention to IWA events than at present. One should consider the advantage that English is on its way to becoming a globally recognized language in the field of water engineering.

Moreover, I have the following observation. IWA's bottom-up approach is inherited from the wastewater organisation IAWQ. The top-down-culture of IWSA (which is more commonplace in the world of drinking water) should also be offered to those who favour this approach. Judging from observation, this is the way many municipal utilities would like to use a global water association. Overall, I view IWA to be in a good way: it seems that the efficiency of the headquarters has increased significantly over the last year. This is important and necessary so that IWA can keep track of all its activities and enlarge its membership by constantly using its connections, databases and networks.

- *Contact points*  
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