

An aerial photograph of a river with a winding path through a lush green landscape. The water is a vibrant green, and the surrounding vegetation is a mix of dark and light greens. The path is a thin, dark line that curves through the landscape. The overall scene is bright and natural.

# Travelguide to a river

with the

Youth Network for River Action  
2016 to the Spree of Berlin

Quiet tranquilo  
beautiful hermoso

large largo  
lone solo

strong fuerte  
black negro



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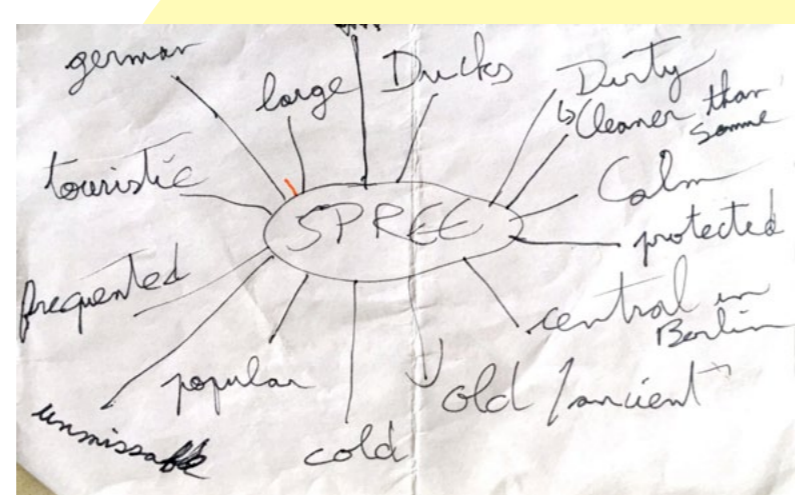
Berlin, 10/2016

*updated 12/2016*



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# I. Introduction

Travellers, do you wonder about the blue line meandering across the map of the city you travel to? Do you wonder when you will see the city's river for the first time . . . and whether will you see it? Do you wonder whether you will see the city from the river? And what difference this would make?

This tour guide documents a visit to the Spree by a group of students from different European and Middle East Countries. Travelling with an idea from Goethe, they documented their first impressions, turned them into poetry and paintings, and captured the essence of their visit to the Spree in powerful sentences.

Apart from carefully encountering the Spree, they also took water quality measurements, participated in a river parliament and celebrated the European river swimming day with a water music orchestra on the Spree's Isle of Youth. There they presented a set of water conservation demands and jumped into the Spree with the slogan: "The Spree is life - la-la-la-la-la!"

This tour guide is also policy guide for hydro-citizens: it moves from encountering the river to slogans and political demands, presented towards the end of this guide.

Your tour guides are members of the international Youth Network for River Action (YNRA) that met in Berlin, July 2016 for a week of sensing the river and its city.

For **Berliners** this guide provides access to a river that is all too often simply taken for granted. Yet the Spree not only flows through the centre of Berlin, but also as drinking water through the Berliners' stomachs.

For the **YNRA participants**, this guide is a documentation of their visit to/into the Spree.

For their **friends and potential future visitors** to Berlin – and really any city with a river – it proposes a way of travelling.

The Spree, as rivers worldwide, has been subject to heavy urban use: straightened for transportation, extracted for personal and industrial consumption, treated as a wastewater "bin" that can purify itself. . . Yet this river, as many rivers, is increasingly also reappreciated for its environmental, social and cultural values. Travelling on this wave of appreciation, the guide ends with demands for the Spree, publicly presented at the European River Swimming Day, July 2016.

**Gute Reise!**



Youth Network for River Action crossing the Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders-Steg just before the River Parliament

dead mrtva slow pocasna lazy lena unclean umazana

not her fault ni sama kriva reflecting odsevajoca limited omejena

warm cald strong puternic mysterious misterios ancient antic flow curgator hidden spark flacara ascunsa calm calm  
urban urban slowly incet quiet tacut

Calm calme

strong fort love amour meditation meditation

Shades nuancee pretty jolie relax reposante ecology ecologie deep profunde cool paisible

# Earth, Water, Air and Fire -

## With Goethe to the Spree

The poet Goethe invites you to enjoy fully your senses and your creativity when travelling to a river. Here is a very brief sketch of a much longer story that our Goethe-working group was inspired by during our Berlin camp:

The first step is; not to miss the first encounter! But to experience it consciously and record it in words or with a drawing. "It is like the moment of entering a foreign city for the first time and being immediately taken by its unusual sights, sounds and smells", notes Nigel Hoffmann.

This first impression sets the stage for the Earth phase: precisely describe the phenomenon - here a river - relying on all the senses of sight, hearing, tastes, touch and smell. Develop a "solid" grasp of what you see.

Next comes the "water stage", which seeks to capture the observations from the last stage as something fluid, something living. The focus is on change and metamorphosis.

In the "air phase", try to capture the fluidity and movement of the last stage as a gesture, as an expression of a living being.

Finally, fire! Your poetic theory of what you see, of the river, is called for. "Goethe talks about expressing the 'archetypal phenomenon' in terms of 'short, pregnant sentences' (Hoffmann).

It is the art of capturing the essence.

For a detailed account of what has been sketched here only see: Nigel Hoffmann, Goethean Phenomenology as a New Ecological Discipline, in David Seamon and Arthur Zajonc (ed.) Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature, New York, 1998.



Shades nuancee ~ pretty jolie ~  
relax reposante ~ ecology écologie ~  
deep profonde ~ cool paisible ~

by Wynona Genlot  
(from France)

dead mrtva ~ slow počasna  
~ lazy lena ~

unclean umazana ~ not her fault ni sama kriva  
~ reflecting odsevajoca ~ limited omejena ~  
still alive se zivi ~ has potential ima potencial  
~ loved ljubljena

by Pia Mlinar  
(from Slovenia)

Nature natuur ~ green groen ~  
source of all life bron van al het leven ~  
hope and loss hoop en verliezen ~  
dream droom ~ powerful energiek ~  
never ending geen einde ~  
connecting connecting ~  
peace vrede ~ happy blij

by Bernard Beeuwkes  
(from the Netherlands)

Quiet tranquilo ~ slow lento ~ large largo  
~ strong fuerte ~ beautiful hermoso ~  
infinity infinito ~ alone solo ~ black negro  
~ special especial ~ sad triste ~

by Alexandra Ionica  
(from Romania)

~ Calm calme ~ strong fort ~ love amour  
~ meditation méditation ~

by Viktor Mace (from France)

# First impressions of the River Spree

Urban ~ industrial  
~ flow  
artificial ~ horror  
~ natural  
mixed ~ living source  
~existence

by Yoav Bar Ness  
(from Israel)

To me the Spree is the main  
vein that feeds my favorite  
city. It divides it into  
different parts and it doesn't  
discriminate. The Spree has  
seen so much, been through  
so much. It has survived  
wars and even after dark

periods she  
shines in the sun.  
by Sterre van Wirdum  
(from the Netherlands)

Calm calme ~  
strong fort ~  
big grand ~  
pleasant agréable ~  
trapped piégée ~  
relax reposant ~  
lonely seul ~  
by Nathan Cocarde  
(from France)

dirty sale ~ calm calme ~ large large ~  
central central ~ protected protégée ~  
old ancienne ~ cold froide ~  
popular populaire ~ unmissable inmanquable  
~ frequented fréquentée ~  
touristic touristique ~

by Pierrick Pihan  
(from France)

Quiet linistit ~  
interesting interesant ~  
untouchable inaccessibil ~ beautiful frumos ~  
cold rece ~ sad trist ~ ignorant ignorant ~  
slow lent ~ sleepy adormit ~ intense intens

by Oana Catalina  
Zaulet Dumenuca  
(from Romania)

warm cald ~ strong puternic ~  
mysterious misterios ~ ancient antic ~  
flow curgator ~  
hidden spark flacara ascunsa ~ calm calm ~  
urban urban ~ slowly incet ~ quiet tacut

by Teodora Bunescu  
(from Romania)

deep porofondo ~ relax rilassante ~  
silence silenzioso ~ melodius melodioso ~  
interesting interessante ~ life vita ~  
pretty carino ~ calm calmo ~

by Zoqi Soukaina  
(from Belgium)

alive silnaa ~ pure chistta ~  
tranquil spokoina ~ strong sillna ~  
graceful graziozna ~ loving luibqshta ~fearless  
bezstrashna ~ sad tyjna

by Miroslava Vladkova

# Earth, Water, Air and Fire – With Goethe at the Spree

**Pia Mlinar (Slovenia)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” sensory/factual descriptions)  
I used to be a beauty,  
I used to be a queen.  
That travelled without borders,  
My dance was called “Spream”.

But now, where is my beauty?  
Where is the dance of queen?  
It is hidden in the depths of heart,  
Spree name, that’s what it seems.

Behold, look at me – a beauty!  
Once again I’ll be a queen!  
I’ll dance like no other,  
And dance will “Spree dream”.

Stage 2 (“water” imagination poetry)  
Vrba zalujka (Willow tree) – is crying over river.  
Zakaj jokas (why are you crying) – Willow tree?  
“Moje solze so (my tears are) – river Spree



In moja bol (and my pain) – is in memory.”

Veter (wind) – is singing an old melody,  
Pesem (song) – is hidden for those who can’t see.  
“Odpri oci (open your eyes) – of your heart and  
your soul,  
Sebe in njo (yourself and her) – you’ll get to know  
more.”

Stage 3 (“air” artistry) *Here and on the following pages  
always at the bottom of the page!*

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)  
Source of life that gives its self unselfishly, so that  
you and me could live.  
Izvir zivljenja, Ki se nesebicno razdaja, Da bi jaz in  
ti Zivela.

*Watch Pia  
read her poem!*

**Bernard Beeuwkes (The Netherlands)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” factual descriptions)  
Water, the beginning of life.  
Life is the beginning of all.  
From the beginning in the clouds,  
Then raining on the mountains,  
It is flowing with the river,  
And ending in the sea where it is mixing with all  
waters of the world.

Where in the world there is too little water  
Dry and thirsty  
Where in the world there is too much water  
Drowning and floods  
Water is the friend of power and life  
And we cannot live without him.

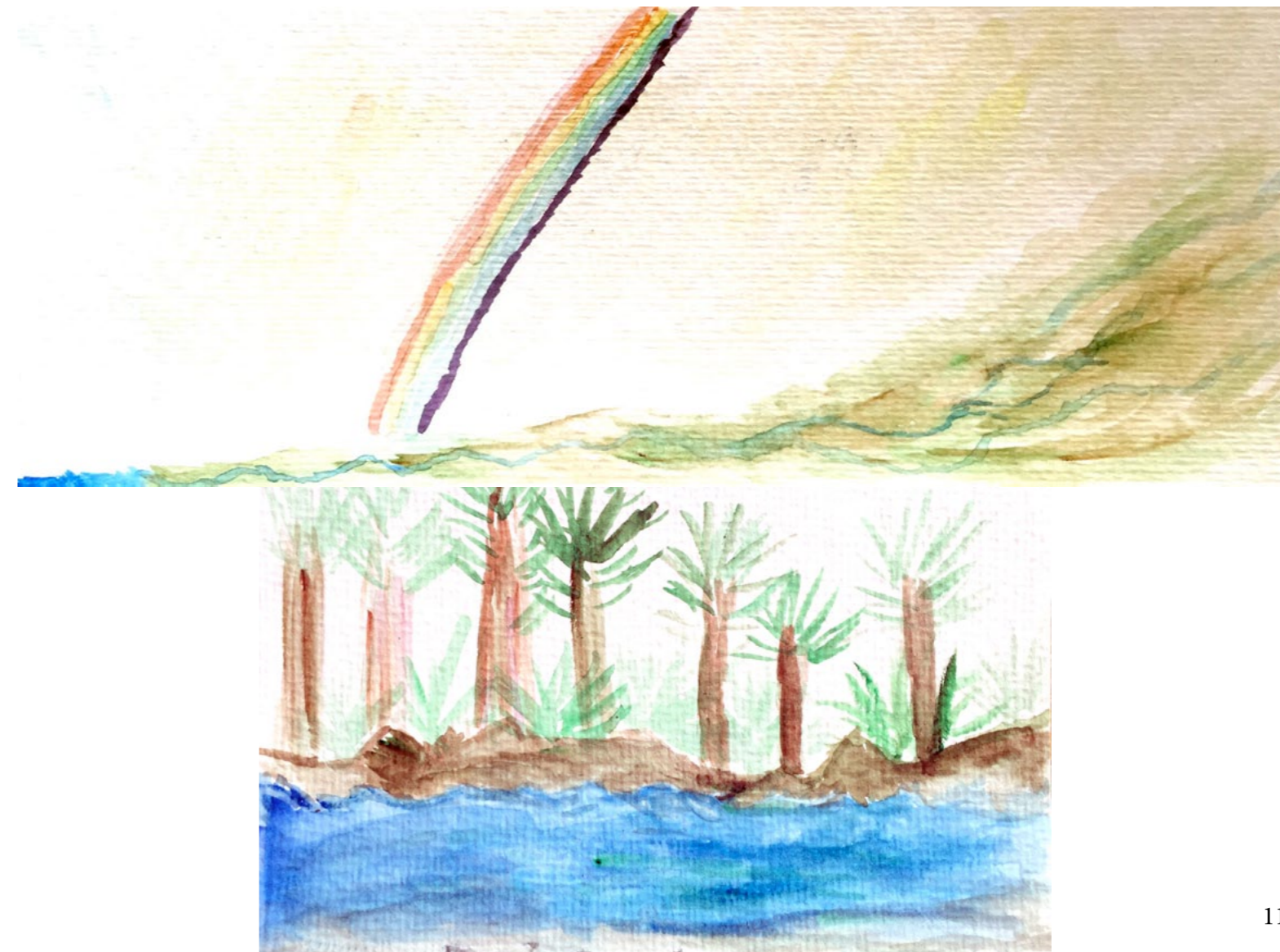
Stage 2 (“water” poetry)  
It’s flowing from where it begins high in the moun-  
tains

And travelling far to the sea  
It has no beginning and no end  
Water is a place full of life.  
In the water and on land,  
Where all animals and humans need water.  
Where land ends, water begins.  
Water is the mind of all life.

*Watch  
Bernard read  
his poem!*

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)  
The Spree is connected with all life in the world.  
Animals drinking from the spring and people  
swimming in the water.



**Alexandra Ionica (Romania)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” factual descriptions)  
The river is an urban chaos explored by humans. It is deep and alone. I can smell the river and over and over it is different. I can feel the river and now I am sure that this river is unique. It is large but I do not know what her dimensions are.  
It is like a little sea in the centre of Berlin. In this part of nature you can see humans but you can see as well colorful ducks and of lot of green spaces.

Stage 2 (“water” poetry)  
The Spree is more than one river, it is the perfect place when you can stay when you need loneliness. Here you can see a lot of birds and green places. I feel this river, I feel the vibe

because:  
Spree is life  
Spree is all  
And I want be here more and more

Watch Alexandra read her poem!

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)  
Stage 4 (“fire” essences)

Spree is like a score...  
Yes, you can find here the musical notes of nature.



**Zoqi Soukaina (Belgium)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” sensory/factual descriptions)

Stage 2 (“water” imagination poetry)  
Dear Spree  
When I saw you for the first time, I was so impressed  
You are so deep and beautiful  
Your silence makes me travel in my mind and lets me feel like there’s no one around me and lets myself feel free.  
You are so big and calm - that makes you mysterious.  
I always love to speak with you to keep out all my pains and feelings.  
In side of you there’s life.

Watch Soukaina read her poem!

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)  
Stage 4 (fire)  
Spree. It’s mine. Spree. It’s yours. Spree. It’s ours.



**Yoav Bar Ness (Israel)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” sensory/factual descriptions)  
The spree river is a source of life. We drink its water with no doubts whatsoever.

The birds are plenty and looking above us – they don’t have our artificial treasure. Instead of its feeling they enjoy its view, they don’t taste it, rather looking at us taking its most precious wonders, instead of coexisting with its ecosystem – we took pride of our technology.

Must be sad to watch us from above, knowing and sensing that it has no end.

The ecosystem is dead, why won’t they take their pride back?

Stage 2 (“water” imagination poetry)

Sky high water comes down to the ground. The soil embraces the liquid form of happiness, seems as it screams thank you, sky, for your kindness.

And here I am sitting down the bank of the Spree, envisioning the ongoing circle of life. Perhaps these H<sub>2</sub>O particles were once in someone’s toilet, but now it is here, waiting for some hot summer days to vaporise them, patiently. It’s quiet.



Much like the water I come from elsewhere, from a different place. I’m waiting on the wind to turn my page.

We all want to take a part of life, and it isn’t a cliché, but an actual pathway for us to achieve. I mean, if the beautiful Spree was once in the toilet, it’s just temporary if currently it’s the wrong place. Onwards you shall go, grow! In one’s direction—this isn’t the end this is just the beginning, let yourself enjoy—be yourself the river’s flow.



Stage 3 (“air” artistry)

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)

The Spree is not only a beautiful and powerful source of water or life, but a symbol for our very existence. Its future is ours. We are its present.

**Pierrick Pihan (France)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” sensory/factual descriptions)  
Spree doesn’t really smell in a good or a bad way. It looks really clear, clean, its transparency is almost complete. It also looks calm, peaceful, and goes really slowly. It doesn’t taste good, it taste like strongly ironized water. Not cold but not hot, its temperature is quite pleasant actually, refreshing in the summer times. It looks like the berliners are very attached to the Spree. It have a central position in Berlin, running through all the city, with lots of spots for recreation times (docks, benches, relaxing chairs...). Humans domesticated it, forced it into a certain way down Berlin. Spree is quite deep (around 10 meters I would say) but not so polluted, really enjoyable. The many ducks that live and swim in it can testify.

Stage 2 (“water” imagination poetry)

Hello, it’s Spree... I was wondering if after all these years you’d like to swim... enjoy the water, and chillin’. They say Berlin supposed to clean me, but I ain’t seen much cleaning...

Hello, can you hear me, I’m in Berlin dreamin’ about how clean I used to be... When I was younger, and free... I forgot how it felt before they rearranged my flow...

There’s such a problem between us, and we runnin’ out of time...

Hello from the river siiiiiiiiiiiiiiide, I must have called a thousand times, to tell you to help me, to be all clear again, let’s be together, in my cleaner water.

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)

Spree is life. (lalalalala). Spree is life. (lalalalala). When we’re all in the water, we feel free and wet. (The Spree anthem).





**Teodora Bunescu (Romania / Romanian)**

**The Spree**

Stage 1 ("earth" sensory/factual descriptions)

Stage 2 ("water" imagination poetry)

I was there the first time  
When the river took shape,  
I felt his feelings  
Of joy and happiness,  
Because he was free  
But he still is,  
We just don't know that  
He lets us play with him,

He lets us trap him  
In the city, and he waits...  
He waits the moment,  
When he will show us,  
His strength and beauty  
And he will always be free.

Stage 3 ("air" artistry)

Stage 4 ("fire" essences)

Berlin is kept alive by Spree because in the  
Spree you can hear the music of the earth.



**Miroslava Vladkova (Bulgaria)**

**The Spree**

Stage 1 ("earth" factual/sensory descriptions)

Sitting here-smelling, watching, touching, hearing this beautiful river I can't help feeling sad. We have taken the Spree's right to be free, we have built walls on each side, we are making profits from the tourism we have developed onto it. Watching this nature's wonder trapped makes me feel like I have to help, make a change, free it. But I can't. Watching this beautiful river, I can't help but feel sad.

Stage 2 ("water" imagination poetry)

Kogato ima voda, ima jivot.  
Kogato ima jivot, ima istoriq.  
Kogato ima istoriq, ima spomeni.  
Kogato ima spomeni, ima liubov.  
Kogato ima liubov, ima strast.  
Kogato ima strast, ima jelaniq.  
Kogato ima jelaniq, ima mehti.  
Kogato ima mehti, ima bydeshte.  
Kogato ima bydeshte, ima voda.  
Spree beshe, Spree e, Spree shte byde.

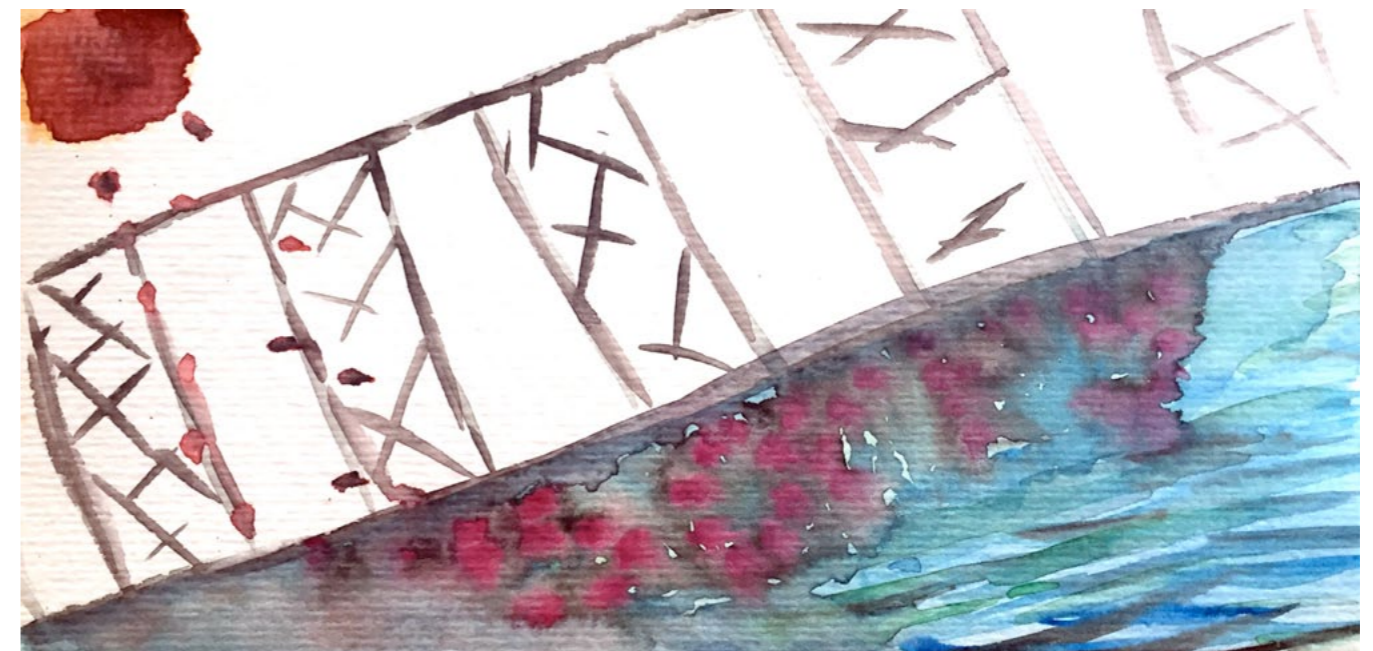
When there is water, there is life.  
When there is life, there is history.  
When there is history, there are memories.  
When there are memories, there is love.  
When there is love, there is passion.  
When there is passion, there are desires.  
When there are desires, there are dreams.  
When there are dreams, there is a future.  
When there is a future, there is water.

*Watch Miroslava  
read her poem!*

Stage 3 ("air" artistry)

Stage 4 ("fire" essences)

The Spree is life! Rekata e jivot!

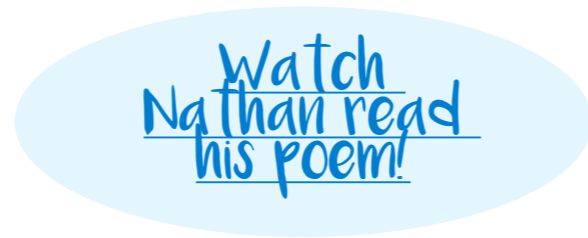


**Nathan Cocarde (France)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 ("earth" sensory/factual descriptions)  
La Spree n'a pas d'odeur. Elle est à la même température que l'air, ni froide, ni chaude. Elle n'est pas dans son environnement naturel, donc elle ne peut pas s'écouler librement. On pourrait croire qu'elle est arrêtée. Elle a l'air d'être profonde par sa couleur. Les bateaux font vivre ou animent la Spree. Ils produisent des vagues qui viennent s'écraser contre les berges. La Spree n'est plus naturelle depuis que l'homme a bâti sur ses extrémités.

Stage 2 ("water" imagination poetry)  
Une goutte d'eau qui tombe du ciel. Se loge dans un creux de la terre. Puis d'autres la rejoignent pour s'écouler furtivement vers une autre étendue. Elles sont là, des milliers, toutes ensemble, guidées par ce chemin de pierres.

Couleurs ternes et fonds ténébreux. Tristesse éternelle, comme des larmes.  
A drop of water is falling from the sky. Housing in earth's hollow.



Stage 3 ("air" artistry)  
Stage 4 ("fire" essences)  
Spree is life, la laa la la... Water is one of the principle element which the nature needs to be alive. As you. (The Spree anthem).



**Liron Vishnia (Israel)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 ("earth" sensory/factual descriptions)  
The river feels for me fresh, surprising, tempting, anaesthetic, confusing, pleasant. It smells musty. In my opinion, the residents think that the river is annoying and feel disconnected from it. But maybe they are happy because they make money from the tourist boats. The tourists love the river and are enthusiastic that have a river in the middle of the city.  
Stage 2 ("water" imagination poetry)  
Big river, passion.  
It gives me a sense of power.  
The inspiration spreading,  
Slowly, slowly spreading.  
And inside me, quiet flows.  
Flows between my arteries.  
Flows like the river.

Occasionally sailed scary thoughts.  
Violates the flow rate.  
Like a quick tour boat.  
The thought passes,  
The quiet flowing slowly returning.  
And when the quiet repeats,  
I can return to breathe.

Stage 3 ("air" artistry)  
Stage 4 ("fire" essences)  
Spree is a river that passes through the city and is natural point in the city. Thankfully the Spree has a special connection between nature and the city and there is no sense that I need to choose only one of them. It is the perfect combination.



**Wynona Genlot (France)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” sensory/factual descriptions)

Selon les endroits, l’odeur est différente. Le fer est perceptible, il se ressent quand on hume l’air. De façon étonnante le courant est visible pourtant le clapotis contre la berge est presque inaudible. Malgré la profondeur et l’opacité la Spree paraît calme et reposée. Les canards présents dessus ont l’air d’être liés à cette rivière. Ils vivent avec elle et non pas sur elle. Ils en connaissent tout de même les dangers car pas un seul ne s’endort les palmes dans l’eau. L’étendue calme et sereine se voit troublée par des bâtiments promenant des touristes. La vague, projetée contre la berge, se retourne et retrouve son calme initial.

Stage 2 (“water” imagination poetry)

Au début, j’étais là-haut. J’ai pu voir le monde s’éveiller, la lumière irrigue la terre et le ciel. Puis un flash. Violent, sourd, brutal. J’aurais dû m’y préparer. J’ai pourtant vu les signes annonciateurs. Le vent a tourné. J’ai d’abord eu chaud. Ensuite je me suis sentie tomber, couleur,

ruisseler à travers le monde. Et je me suis écrasée contre une Terre dure, froide et aride à la fois. J’ai bien cru avoir atteint la fin de mon existence alors que je venais justement de la débiter. Je me souviens bien de ce moment où j’étais seule. D’un coup, d’autres sont arrivées. Petit à petit, le lit s’est rempli. En petit nombre, individuellement. Puis toutes ensemble dans un fracas, ce sont mises à tomber et comme moi à s’écraser contre la Terre nouvelle. Je ne me souviens plus pourquoi ni comment cela est arrivé mais nous nous sommes réunies. Surement par peur de la solitude. Nous nous sommes donc toutes retrouvées et maintenant ne nous formons qu’une. Une seule entité, une unité, unie face aux changements qu’on nous impose. D’ailleurs avec les autres, on ne comprend pas pourquoi on nous oblige à rester entre ces barrières sur lesquels se promènent des êtres. C’est comme ça, c’est tout. C’est la vie. Une rumeur coule à propos d’une tempête qui nous menace. Je crois qu’il va y avoir du mouvement. J’ai peur. Il fait chaud. J’ai le sentiment de disparaître. Je me lève et je quitte mon lit. Étrangement, je me sens bien. Loin de mes amies mais je



peux à nouveau voir le monde et le dominer à ma façon. A propos de cela, je crois que les êtres qui se sont promenés sur ma prison, me craignent. Ils me regardent en levant la tête. Cependant ils doivent m’aimer car la plupart ne veulent pas me voir tomber. J’ai le sentiment que tout va recommencer. La chute, l’étalement, l’union puis... la mort ? Ca y est, c’est l’heure, je tombe à nouveau. Oh! Mes amies! Je nage avec elle! J’entends que l’on m’appelle, on me regarde, on me boit. J’ai un nom, je suis quelque chose et je suis importante. Une infime partie dans un magnifique ensemble qui coulera à jamais. Je suis une simple goutte. Je m’appelle la Spree. Ma vie est un long fleuve tranquille.

*Watch Wynona read her poem!*

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)  
Spree is life! (la la, la la). (The Spree anthem).

**Viktor Mace (France)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” sensory/factual descriptions)  
Douce et épaisse, une odeur de vieillesse pimente d’un gout de pollution, not cold, not hot, good température.

Slowly and powerful like the walk of the emperor. Très sombre, mais la lumière du soleil illumine son esprit fort. Il absorbe notre ombre, adoucie nos traits.

Ses pierres, sa ferraille, le font vieux, mais accentue sa puissance.

Il est là, il reste, protégeant un royaume, une vision inaccessible. Il renvoie nos images avec un mouvement de beauté. Nous lui ressemblons finalement, lent et puissant comme nos foules. Dénaturé pour être plus fort, il est là, il était là et restera là.

Il veillera comme nous vieilliront, rapidement, mais de façon si lente.

On se voit en lui. On pollue son corps comme nous polluons le nôtre.

Imperturbable est sa puissance, il coule lentement au fil des âges.

Stage 2 (“water” imagination poetry)

Calme, existence et douceur,

Sont les mots définissant cette parfaite lenteur, Sa beauté navigue entre ses eaux sombres et son

reflet brillant,

Sa lenteur contraste avec cette vie rapide et énergique autour de lui,

Ses vieux murs supportent l’amour des âges, la vieillesse et la mélancolie,

Voilà des centaines d’années qu’il attire la vie et rejette la mort.

Calm, existence and gentle,

Are the words which define this perfect slowness, His beauty sails between his sombre waters and his brilliant reflexion,

His slowness contrasts with this fast and energetic life around him,

His old walls support the love of all time, old age and melancholy

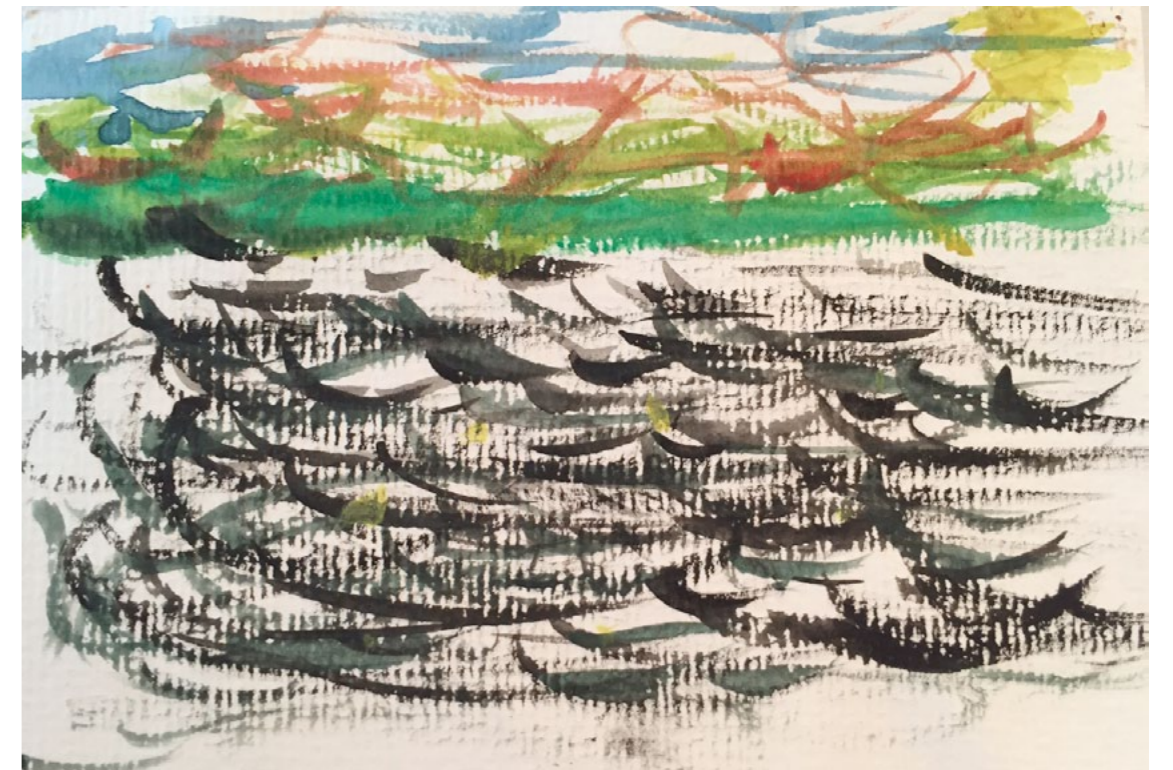
These are hundreds of years that attracts life and rejects death.

*Watch Viktor read his poem!*

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)

A slow and sleepy powerful wind, blows around the Spree.



**Sterre van Wirdum (The Netherlands)**  
**The Spree**

Third (!) Impression:  
To me the Spree is the main vein that feeds my favorite city. It divides it into different parts and it doesn't discriminate. The Spree has seen so much, been through so much. It has survived wars and even after dark periods she shines in the sun.

Stage 1 ("earth" factual descriptions)  
I love the calming sounds of the river. To me, the Spree has the same effect on me as the city it goes through. It's so larger and yet it is so calming. It changes every second, the light likes to play with it. And in some way it is inspiring me. This river has been through so much, she has seen so much and yet here she is. Strong and beautiful. I love Berlin, it's one of my favorite places in the whole world. And as I'm sitting here, with so many new friends, from so many different countries, who speak so many different languages I truly feel happy. I have the river breeze going through my hair, playing with it. I have a dozen small birds at my feet, the fresh smell of the river in my nose, the sound of people enjoying the river in my ears. What more could I wish for?

Stage 2 ("water" poetry)  
Here I am sitting close to the river Spree. I feel alone,

but not lonely. Because a few metres away from me are my friends. I can hear them laughing and talking in so many different languages. Around me are a few little birds and in front a beautiful swan is carefully watching me. I hear the bells of a clock far away. I feel the grass under me and although the sky is grey and filled with clouds I feel safe and warm and covered. Above me and around me a big old tree with many green leaves is watching over me. I love nature, I've always have. I live in a small and quiet town. In 5 minutes I am in the middle of mother nature. I like big cities, but only for a few days cause I always miss the presence of mother nature. Thanks to the Spree and the many trees surrounding it I don't feel like that in Berlin. As I'm sitting here I feel strangely comfortable and at home. Thank you Spree for making me feel at home so far away from home.

Stage 3 ("air" artistry)  
It's the breeze on a summer day,  
A little duck that makes my anger go away.

It's a little kid feeding the ducks some bread,  
A circle of life and death.

It's the sound of people having fun,  
In the winter, spring, summer or autumn sun.  
It's the smell of fish, ducks and fresh water,

While a little kid is playing with his father.  
It's the little birds looking for food,  
And lightening up my mood.  
It's the swans swimming by,  
A little bird learning to fly.

It's the water and the ground,  
Where happy moments can be found.  
It's the main vein of my favourite city,  
And always so pretty.  
And after each war,  
She's still as beautiful as before.  
And all these things are to me,  
Just a few reasons why I love the Spree.

Watch Sterre read her poem!

Stage 4 ("fire" essences)  
Just like the water in our body is keeping us alive, healthy and happy, the Spree is keeping Berlin alive, healthy and happy.  
Net zoals het water in ons lichaam ons in leven houdt en ons gezond en blij maakt zorgt de Spree voor een levend, gezond en blij Berlijn.



**Oana Catalina Zaulet Dumenica (Romania)**  
**The Spree**

Stage 1 (“earth” factual descriptions)

Spree is a large amount of water which crosses Berlin. The water temperature is 2 or 3 degrees lower than the air temperature. The colour is green due to the pollution by the Berliners. It is smelling like it has iron in it but it might be because of the place I took the water from. The people put it between concrete banks to use it, but the state of the water makes me think that Spree is trying to take revenge on people by not having pure water. It still lets the ducks swim on it.

The fact that the river is so slow is because he is so old and he hasn't enough power to go faster anymore. It surely was there before humans and maybe it will be there after human races. Spree este o mare cantitate de apa care traverseaza Berlinul. Temperatura apei este cu 2 sau 3 grade mai mica decat cea de afara. Culoarea apei este verde datorita poluarii oamenilor care locuiesc in Berlin . Apa miroase ca si cum ar contine fier dar asta se poate datora locului din care am luat-o. Oameni au inchis raul intre diguri dar ,starea in care se afla apa raului , ma face sa cred ca Spreeul incearca sa se razbune pe acestia . Ratele inca pot inota in aceea apa . Tind sa cred ca raul este foarte batran si pentru ca nu mai are puterea sa curga mai repede si de asta curge asa incet.

Stage 2 (“water” poetry)

I am the Spree, an old river that cross Berlin. I were there before humans and now I am just watching them. I am slow not only because the peace surrounding me. It is true that I am not clean anymore but this is because of humans. I am not upset with them. I understand that they need my help to keep their city safe. I am happy that people understand this is a problem and they try to fix it in their own way. Sometimes I need some freedom which I lost when they put me in this cage for their protection.

There are ducks and swans that keep me company but this not enough. I want the humans to come back and swim free again. I am really happy that few people come but I want more and not with boats because I can't feel them when they don't touch me, they can't understand me like you try to do now.

I'm asking you what do you think when you look at me. Can you understand me? Can you feel me? Can you understand how much did I saw from your world and how many did you? Compared with me, you are very fragile and still you want to protect me.

I am an old river which flows from the beginning of the world, Down right after the German wall,

In the city of Berlin, To see how all of you have been.

Watch Oana read her poem!

Stage 3 (“air” artistry)

Stage 4 (“fire” essences)

Spree represents the history and the future of Berlin due to his eternal existence.



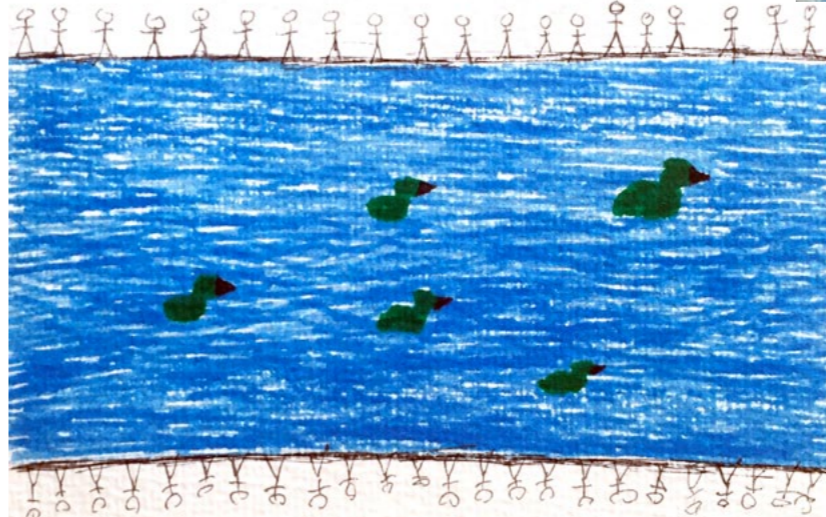


Spree

big jump challenge



MORE Spree Impressions from stage Aik



TANK YOU FOR MY FREEDOM



The Spree  
It's the breeze on a summer day  
A little duck that makes my anger so away.  
It's a little kid feeding the ducks some bread.  
A world of life and death  
It's the sound of people having fun.  
In the winter, spring, summer or autumn run.  
It's the smell of fish, ducks and fresh water.  
While a little kid is playing with his father.  
It's the little birds looking for food.  
And lightning up my mood.  
It's the swans swimming by.  
A little bird learning to fly.  
It's the water and the ground  
Where happy moments can be found.  
It's the main vein of my favorite city  
And always so pretty.  
And after each visit  
She's still as beautiful as before.  
And all these things are to me  
Just a few reasons why I love the Spree



Spree is like a score...

Yes, you can find here the musical notes of nature.

*(Alexandra Ionica from Romania)*

The Spree is not only a beautiful and powerful source of water or life,  
but a symbol for our very existence. Its future is ours.

We are its present.

*(Yoav Bar Ness from Israel)*

Spree represents the history and the future  
of Berlin due to his eternal existence.

*(Oana Zaulet from Romania)*

Berlin is kept alive by Spree because in the  
Spree you can hear the music of the earth.

*(Teodora Bunescu from Romania)*

Just like the water in our body is keeping us alive, healthy and happy,  
the Spree is keeping Berlin alive, healthy and happy.

Net zoals het water in ons lichaam ons in leven houdt en ons gezond  
en blij maakt zorgt de Spree voor een levend, gezond en blij Berlijn.

*(Sterre Eliza van Wirdum from the Netherlands)*

The Spree is connected with all life in the world.

Animals drinking from the spring and people swimming in the water.

*(Bernard Beeuwkes from the Netherlands)*

FIRE  
Essences  
&

Pregnant  
Sentences

Spree. It's mine. Spree. It's yours. Spree. It's ours.

*(Zoqi Soukaina from Belgium)*

Spree is life, la laaa la la la... Water is one of the principle  
element which the nature needs to be alive. As you.

*(The Spree anthem).*

*(Nathan Cocarde from France)*

Spree is life. (lalalalala). Spree is life. (lalalalala).

When we're all in the water, we feel free and wet.

*(The Spree anthem).*

*(Pierrick Pihan from France)*

The Spree is life! Rekata e jivot!

*(Miroslava Vladrova from Bulgaria)*

Source of life that gives its self unselfishly, so that you and me could live.

Izvir zivljenja, Ki se nesebicno razdaja, Da bi jaz in ti Zivela.

*(Pia Mlinar from Slovenia)*

Spree is life! (la la, la la la). *(The Spree anthem).*

*(Wynona Genlot from France)*

Big Jump Berlin 2016

Water Quality Group



The **water quality group** at work near Jannowitz Brücke, 7.07.2016

The good news: measuring results point to a good status of freshwater quality (according to the Water Framework Directive).

The bad news: There is so far no cheap and quick way to test swimming water quality with respect to coliforms (faecal coliforms and streptococci).

But: But as Wolfgang Seis (KWB) told us during the

camp, the project [Flusshygiene](#) currently explores ways to make water quality information for rivers more accessible to citizens (and to reduce the sources of the contamination!).



## Water Quality Test

Sampling site	1) (close to the bridge for university bridge)	2)	3)
PH-Value	7,7	7,5	7,5
Ammonium (mg/l)	<del>2,5</del> 0,2	0,2	0
Nitrate (mg/l)	0	4	5
Nitrite (mg/l)	0,07	0	0,02
Phosphate (mg/l)	0,2	0	1
Total hardness (°dH)			
Carbonate hardness			
O2 saturation (mg/l)	3	3	9

Water quality class of the WFD : 1-2

Results from the water quality test 2016

Flussbad Walk

Impression from the guided tour with Flussbad Berlin e.V.





IV.  
Theatre Group:  
Water Orchestra  
&  
Poseidon  
Jumps

As an overture to our Big Jump from the Isle of Youth, the theatre group played water music, and Poseidon a.k.a Eduard displayed Big Jump fashion 2016.



# Big Jump Demands 2016

Demands for water protection in Berlin were discussed with Silke Gebel (Member of the Berlin Parliament) during the European River Swimming Day (Big Jump) 2016, in Berlin at the Ilse of Youth, Treptower Park, 10.7.2016

1. Return the Spree to the Berliners: a river pool in the Spreekanal in central Berlin along with artificial river renaturation in the upper part and a natural water filter for the purification of the water for swimming in the middle part of the canal, would make Berlin a symbol for modern water protection. The changing relation of citizens to their rivers finds expression in the cultural and ecological aspect of such river swimming projects. The potential of further swimming spots in the Berlin Spree should also be investigated.
2. Water protection is a multigenerational task: it calls for a permanent position for water protection education at the Berlin Senate. It would strengthen the already existing bottom-up network for water education in Berlin and promote in a cost-effective way the long-run inclusion of Berliners in the water management of their city from an early age.
3. No more wastewater release into the Spree: 20-30 times a year, the Berlin sewage system overflows (during heavy rain) and wastewater flows untreated into the river. However, even the prolonged Water Framework directive management plans of the city do not remove this problem. There is a need to return the water Berliners take from the Spree, not least for drinking, in a clean way to the river with the help of rainwater harvesting, retentions space for heavy rain events and a fourth treatment stage for waste water.
4. Implement renaturation conceptions: There are renaturation plans for Spree tributaries such as the Panke, Tegler Fließ and Wuhle. Their implementation should be advanced speedily and with the necessary resources.
5. Spree for all living beings: improve the ecological continuity of the Spree and its tributaries.
6. Co-operation with the province of Brandenburg so as to reduce nutrient loads but also so as to make pressure on mining policy that is detrimental to the climate and to water.
7. International water solidarity: Positioning of Berlin as a Blue community, which endorses – like the city of Bern – the human right to water and the protection of river basins in Europe and worldwide.



Big  
Jump  
Berlin  
2016



Isle of  
Youth  
Trepower  
Park



## Post-Scriptum

After our week, a city dialogue was organized by “Stadtgespräch Berlin”, where citizens discussed options for the “ideal” river swimming spot in Berlin. The area of the Treptower Park with Isle of Youth and Plänterwald came out as the most popular place! See the [documentation](#).

In the city dialogue one person pointed out that the issue should not be “the ideal” swimming spot but many swimming options – for example Flussbad in the centre, swimming spots up-stream and downstream etc. This makes sense for a city of millions of potential swimmers!

More information about water in Berlin & thank you for inputs during the week!

A fascinating project: [Flussbad Berlin](#)

A vision for water management in Berlin: [Berliner Wassercharta](#)

A research project for better and more rapid knowledge on river water quality: [Flusshygiene](#)

The water education network of Berlin: [Gewässerpädagogisches Netzwerk](#)

Big politics: the German parliaments hosts a unique all-party group of parliamentarians devoted to “free flowing rivers”, we met with Steffi Lemke and Peter Maiwald from the group. [Read the report here](#).

Background information about water politics and ethics, is offered by the organizers of the Berlin water camp [GETIDOS](#) and [Grüne Liga](#).



Steffi Lemke & Peter Maiwald during our river parliament

Prior to the Berlin Elections in September, all bigger political parties – social democratic, christian-democratic, left and green – expressed their interest in promoting water protection and river swimming in Berlin. This is good for political uptake of the Big Jump demands, but certainly not simply due to them. It rather shows: we are swimming on a large wave of change for cleaner rivers!

Post-election, coalition negotiations are on-going in Berlin between social democrats, left party and green party with concrete results only to be expected later in November.



Susanne Bernstein, during Flussbad e.V. walk.



Dorothea Härlin, lecture about the Berlin Water Charter.



Wolfgang Seis, lecture about river hygiene.

## There are many ways to join us!

You would like to join a river camp? Next year, we plan to have another river camp in early July. This time in Slovenia and with a focus on wild rivers. The Balkan regions is rich with some of the last wild rivers of Europe, and full with hydropower plans that threaten those rivers. Have a look at [www.bigjump-challenge.net](http://www.bigjump-challenge.net). We expect to have detailed information on the wild river camp in early 2017.

You would like to do something along your river, for your river or for other rivers? Visit our river action toolbox. It provides free online modules to form your own group, reflect on water ethics and water politics, organize practical actions or indeed a big jump, and much more: [http://en.bigjumpchallenge.net/tolbox\\_english.html](http://en.bigjumpchallenge.net/tolbox_english.html).

You have travelled to a river “with Goethe”? Do not hesitate to share your impressions and essences! Contact us at [info@bigjumpchallenge.net](mailto:info@bigjumpchallenge.net).

You would like to stay informed? Then you could subscribe to our newsletter via the [bigjumpchallenge.net](http://bigjumpchallenge.net) homepage or follow us on facebook.

**About the International Youth River Action Network:** In 2012, the social-ecological research platform GETIDOS in cooperation with the European Rivers Network and many further partners initiated the “Big Jump Challenge – youth campaign for water protection” in Germany.

After two successful rounds in Germany, including two youth river parliaments, a decision was made to move to the international level with the “Big Jump Challenge 2015 – European youth campaign for water protection”.

Yet it quickly turned out that teams beyond the borders of the European Union wanted to join in too. The time had come for a “Youth Network for River Action”. Its maxim: we are borrowing water from future generations! Since 2012, over 200 youth teams from 25 countries have made a big splash for water protection.

### About the Berlin River Camp

Workshop organizers: Water quality group (Inès Joubert-Boitat), Theatre group (Marit Buchmeier and Justus Lodemann), Goethian science group (Eleanor Hayman). Camp Management: Anna Bugey. International co-ordination: Inès Joubert-Boitat. Overall project coordination: Rafael Ziegler. Our many partner organizations: see next page.

### Blogs and reports about the Berlin River Camp 2016:

From [WWF Austria/Generation Earth](#), from [Greenvol Georgia](#), from [EcoPeace Middle East](#), from [Yoav](#), from [Georg von Giesche Schule Berlin](#) and on our [Facebook](#).



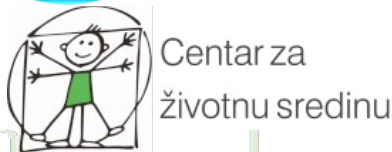
Group of 2016 in Berlin!

Organised by



The Spree is life  
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA!!!

In cooperation with



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