

Rights for Nature – Treat our Rivers Right

Thursday, 22 October 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CEST (Berlin, Munich +x),

9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. Pacific time (Los Angeles, San Francisco +x).

Online seminar by **Living Rivers Foundation** as part of the **Rivers for Climate Coalition** and the Water Working Group of the **German Forum on Environment and Development** celebrating the start of the **Rights for Nature European Citizens' Initiative**.

Rivers are the lifelines of our planet. Mostly Rivers and their waters are regarded as a valuable resource and maybe a source of vital ecosystem services as they provide drinking water resources and room for recreational activities as they constitute crystallisation spaces for human use and settlement, are diked, channelled and dammed with transverse structures to enable agricultural irrigation, generate hydroelectric power, protect against flooding and allow for enhanced navigation. At the same time, their floodplains and currents are diverse natural habitats for migratory fish, small animals and many semi-aquatic species connecting headwaters downstream to estuaries and oceans.

So, should rivers only be regarded in context with their value to humans and their potential to create profit of any kind? Don't they have a right to exist for their own sake and for nature itself? Initiatives in this direction have already been suggested and even implemented in various parts of the globe. A prominent case in Europe is the Mar Menor in Spain. Rights for Nature will start a European Citizens Initiative on 13 October 2026 aiming to get at least 1 million supporters over the course of one year.

The online seminar will be in English and include presentations and a river talks.

Grant Wilson, Earth Law

Monti Aguirre, International Rivers

Emmanuel Schlichter, Rights for Nature, Germany

Jakob Kubala, symbiotic labs

Moderator: Michael Bender, Living Rivers Foundation

The Online Seminar will be conducted via Zoom. The link will be provided once your registration is confirmed. The seminar will record the speakers' input. With your registration you agree to the recording and online publishing on the internet as well as the collection of your data for proceeding your participation.

Please register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/CIRZpWcbR_eWVpYe8qnwQQ

For technical questions you might refer to:

Sara Phung, phung@forumue.de

For remarks on the program you might contact:

Michael Bender, wasser@grueneliga.de



Programme Time in CEST (Pacific Time a.m.)
(Presentations in English)

6:00 p.m. (9:00 a.m.) Welcome and Introduction

6:10 p.m. (9:10 a.m.) **Rights for Nature – a legal perspective**
Grant Wilson, Earth Law

6:30 p.m. (9:30 a.m.) **Rights for Rivers around the World**
Monti Aguirre, International Rivers

6:50 p.m. (9:50 a.m.) **European Citizens Initiative on the Right for Nature**
Emmanuel Schlichter, Rights for Nature, Germany

7:10 p.m. (10:10 a.m.) **Reflection on the Confluence of European Water Bodies**
Jakob Kubballa, symbiotic labs (to be confirmed)

7:30 p.m. (10:30 a.m.) **Discussion**

7:50 p.m. (10:50 a.m.) **Conclusion and Outlook**

Moderator: Michael Bender (Living Rivers Foundation / GRÜNE LIGA)

RIVERS FOR CLIMATE

Rivers for Climate (R4C) is a global coalition advancing climate justice by protecting free-flowing rivers and exposing the false promise of hydropower.

Our efforts span critical global forums to ensure rivers are recognized as central to climate, biodiversity, and cultural survival. R4C will engage state parties, intergovernmental bodies, and civil society year-round to:

- End the recognition of hydropower in climate finance and carbon markets.
- Elevate dam removal and river protection as real climate solutions.
- Secure accurate accounting of dam-related methane emissions.
- Build a powerful movement of Indigenous leaders, scientists, and river defenders worldwide.



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