

# 7<sup>th</sup> Eastern European Young Water Professionals Conference

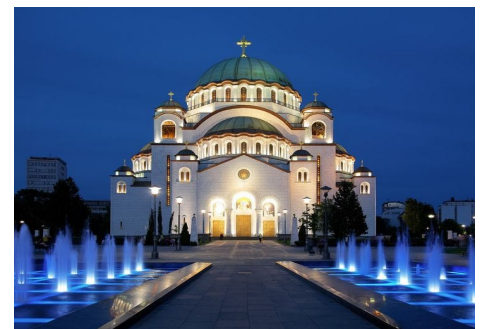
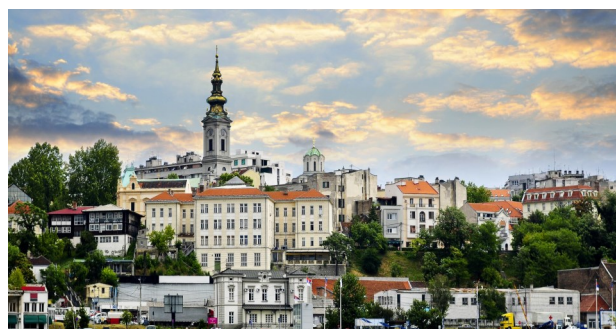


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YOUNG WATER  
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# **Proceedings of the IWA 7<sup>th</sup> Eastern European Young Water Professionals Conference Belgrade, 17-19<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 - 654p.**

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## CONTENT

<u>WATER MANAGEMENT</u>	Pages
<b>Angold Ye.V., Zharkov V.A.</b> Features of Impulse Sprinkling Technology	10
<b>Asatryan V.L., Dallakyan M.R.</b> Development of the Initial Multimetric Index for the Assessment of Ecological State of Lake Sevan (Armenia) Basin Rivers	19
<b>Brborić M., Turk M., Vojinović Miloradov M., Radonić J., Sabolč Pap</b> Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) in Bottom Sediments of the Danube River in the Vicinity of Novi Sad, Serbia	28
<b>Čučak D.I., Marković N.V., Radnović D.V.</b> Microbiological Water Quality of the Nišava River	34
<b>Dotlić M., Vidović D., Pokorni B., Pušić M., Dimkić M.</b> Simulating Groundwater Flows with WODA	39
<b>Drobnjak A., Stefanović M., Milojević M., Đapić M.</b> Flood Early Warning System on the Đetinja River Basin in Serbia	47
<b>Gjunsburgs B., Lauva O.</b> Time of Scour at Steady Flow Conditions at Structures in Plain Rivers	53
<b>Grgić M., Maletić S., Rončević S., Agbaba J., Spasojević J., Molnar Jazić J., Dalmacija B.</b> Bioavailability Assessment of 4-octylphenol and 4-nonylphenol in Sediment	62
<b>Ivetić D., Prodanović D., Milašinović M., Dašić T.</b> One Example of Cascaded Reservoirs Hydropower System Modelling for Master Plan Analysis	69
<b>Jovičić K., Smederevac-Lalić M, Kalauzi A., Krpo-Ćetković J., Lenhardt M., Jarić I.</b> Assessment of the Historic Fishery Sustainability on the Danube River in Belgrade, Serbia	78
<b>Kalajdzisalihović H., Jaćimović N.</b> Establishing Hydraulic Model of the Karst Field Based on Groundwater Level Observations	83
<b>Kragulj Isakovski M., Molnar Jazić J., Maletić S., Tubić A., Agbaba J., Tričković J., Dalmacija B.</b> Method Development for Determination of Selected Priority Hazardous Substances in Water	89

<b>Kostić D., Blagojević A., Subakov Simić G., Predojević D., Naunović Z., Jacimović N., Grasić S.</b> “Blooming” Reservoir Response to a High Inflow Event - Case Study: the Vrutci Reservoir (Western Serbia)	<b>97</b>
<b>Kovačević S., Živančev N., Perović M., Bežanović V., Vojt P., Petković A., Dimkić M.</b> Tracer Test and Monitoring of Behavior and Transport of Selected Pharmaceuticals	<b>105</b>
<b>Lavrnić S., Mancini M.L.</b> Water Scarcity and Wastewater Reuse Standards in South Europe: Focus on Agriculture	<b>113</b>
<b>Lazić G., Grubač S., Bugarski D., Lupulović D., Lazić S., Knežević P., Petrović T.</b> Detection of Viruses in Water Environments in Serbia	<b>122</b>
<b>Majkić-Dursun B., Tončić J., Petković A., J. Čolić</b> Redox Conditions and Groundwater Quality Issues in Selected Alluvial Aquifers in Serbia	<b>130</b>
<b>Milišić H.</b> Transport Processes in Rivers Modelling Using Field Experimental Data	<b>138</b>
<b>Murenji S., Maletić S., Agbaba J., Rončević S., Tubić A., Molnar Jazić J., Kragulj-Isakovski M., Dalmacija B.</b> Anaerobic Degradation of Hydrocarbons from Aquatic Sediment with Sulphate as an Electron Acceptor	<b>146</b>
<b>Nikić J., Agbaba J., Watson M., Maletić S., Molnar Jazić J., Dalmacija B.</b> Adsorption Mechanism of As(V) and As(III) on Fe–Mn Binary Oxides in Synthetic and Real Water Matrices	<b>153</b>
<b>Olenici A., Momeu L., Tornes E., Baciuc C.</b> Morphological Abnormalities of Benthic Diatom Communities from Mining-Impacted Abrud River (Rosia Montana, Romania)	<b>162</b>
<b>Petrović Pantić T., Veljković Ž., Samolov K.</b> Creating the Basic Hydrogeological Maps (BHGM) with Purpose of Managing the Groundwater Resources in Serbia	<b>173</b>
<b>Poguberović S.P., Krčmar D.M., Dalmacija B.D., Maletić S.P., Tomašević-Pilipović D.D., Kerkez Dj.V., Rončević S.D.</b> Removal of Ni(II) and Cu(II) from Aqueous Solutions using “Green” Zero-Valent Iron Nanoparticles Produced by Oak and Mulberry Leaf Extracts	<b>179</b>
<b>Randelović A., Prodanović V., Jacimović N., McCarthy D., Deletić A.</b> Assessing Uncertainty of a Water Quality Model for a Stormwater Biofiltration Treatment System	<b>188</b>

<b>Rosic N., Horvat Z., Horvat M., Zindovic B.</b> Evaluation of the SPH Method in Two Dimensional Open Channel Flow Modeling	<b>194</b>
<b>Rudic Z., Vujovic B., Bozic M., Arizanovic T., Nikolic G., Raicevic V.</b> Assessment of Impact to Special Nature Reserve “Ludas Lake” from the Analysis of Water and Sediment of the Conveyor Canal (Serbia)	<b>199</b>
<b>Stoica C., Camejo J., Banciu A., Cristofor S., Pacheco O.R., Guevara M.</b> Water Quality of Danube Delta Systems: Ecological Status and Prediction using Machine-Learning Algorithms	<b>207</b>
<b>Stojković M., Plavšić J., Despotović J., Prohaska S.</b> Long-term Hydrological Projection of Monthly Flows in Terms of Climate Change Adaptation Strategy	<b>216</b>
<b>Subotić S., Višnjic-Jeftić Ž., Spasić S., Hegediš A., Krpo-Ćetković J., Lenhardt M.</b> Toxic Metals in Muscle Tissue of Nine Fish Species from the Danube River near Belgrade (Serbia)	<b>226</b>
<b>Todorovic A., Plavsic J.</b> Assessment of the Uncertainties in Flow Projections under Climate Change	<b>231</b>
<b>Topalović Ž.</b> Towards Catchment Scale Flood Protection and Climate Change Resilience with System of Reservoirs, Case Study: Vrbas River Basin	<b>245</b>
<b>Tsanov E., Ribarova I., Ninov P., Dimova G., Kossida M., Makropoulos Ch.</b> Water Stress Mitigation in Vit River Basin through Optimization Measures based on WEAP and MatLab Simulations	<b>254</b>
<b>Urošević M., Stefanović M., Milojević M., Milovanovic I., Vukić L.</b> Legislation for Flood Control and Development of Methodology for the Flood Defense Plan in Serbia	<b>264</b>
<b>Vujovic B., Rudic Z., Bozic M., Raicevic V.</b> Phenotypic Diversity of <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> strains in the Protected Nature Park Palic (Serbia)	<b>270</b>
<b>Zindovic B., Kapor R., Savic L., Vojt P., Zugic D.</b> Scale and Numerical Modelling of the Converging Stepped Spillway Flow	<b>277</b>
<b>Zharkov V.A., Angold Ye.V., Kurtebayev B.M.</b> World Irrigation Systems, Technologies and Facilities	<b>284</b>
<b>Zlatanović N., Milovanović I., Čotrić J., Puzović R.</b> Devastating Flooding in Tekija, Serbia in September 2014 and Mitigation Measures	<b>291</b>

## WATER SUPPLY

<b>Allerdings D., Förster G., Vasyukova E., Uhl W.</b> Advanced Oxidation Process for Improved Performance of Ultrafiltration in Drinking Water Applications	<b>297</b>
<b>Angelova I.A.</b> Mathematical Modelling of Hexavalent Chromium Removal from Drinking Water in a Fixed Bed Ion Exchange Column	<b>304</b>
<b>Anggraini A.K., Grotelüschen E., Silva A., Fuchs S.</b> Investigation on Slow Sand Filtration Performance: Influence of Effective Grain Size on the Particle Removal	<b>312</b>
<b>Dejus S., Nescerecka A., Nazarovs S., Juhna T.</b> Review of Existing and Emerging Biological Contamination Detection Tools for Drinking Water Distribution Systems (DWDS) Online Monitoring	<b>320</b>
<b>Gromov G.N.</b> The Development of a Hydraulic Model of Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal Systems: the Case Study of a Large Russian City	<b>333</b>
<b>Kolev I.</b> Study of Water Hammer Possibility and Bad Impact Protection. Case study.	<b>339</b>
<b>Savelyev G.S.</b> Some Special Aspects of a Variable-Frequency Drive Application for the Automatic Control Systems of Pumping Units	<b>349</b>
<b>Şengül A.B., Tüfekçi N., Aktan S.</b> The Use of Alum as Coagulant for Removing Cyanobacterial Cells in Drinking Water	<b>354</b>
<b>Tadic M., Kolovrat K.</b> Cost-Benefit Analysis Of Systematic Reduction Of Water Losses	<b>362</b>
<b>Tubić A., Agbaba J., Molnar Jazić J., Watson M., Dalmacija B.</b> Pilot Scale Investigation of Coagulation Combined with Ozonation and pH Correction in Treatment of NOM Rich Water	<b>370</b>
<b>Vasilić Ž., Stanić M., Ivetić D., Prodanović D.</b> Improving the Hydraulic Analysis of a Water Distribution Network with the $\Delta Q$ Method Using Automatic Identification of Minimal Basis Loops	<b>378</b>
<b>Velten S., Katsoyiannis I.A., Strübing D., Peter A., Boller M.</b> Removal of 2-Isopropyl-3-Methoxypyrazine (IPMP) with Granular Activated Carbon: from Lab Scale to Pilot Scale	<b>386</b>

**SEWAGE MANAGEMENT AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

<b>Aslan S., Gurbuz B.</b> Evaluation of Copper Inhibition on Nitrification Process in a Submerged Biofilter	<b>395</b>
<b>Bakos V., Deák A.</b> Wastewater Sampling and Analysis: Bottlenecks in Design and Modelling Practice	<b>405</b>
<b>Basitere M., Williams Y., Sheldon M.S., Ntwampe S.K.O., De Jager D., Dlangamandla C.</b> Performance of an Expanded Granular Sludge Bed (EGSB) Reactor coupled with Anoxic and Aerobic Bioreactors for Treating Poultry Slaughterhouse Wastewater	<b>415</b>
<b>Bawiec A., Pawęska K., Pulikowski K.</b> Seasonal Changes in the Reduction of Biogenic Compounds in Wastewater Treatment Plants based on Hydroponic Technology	<b>422</b>
<b>Buntić A.V., Pavlović M.D., Šiler-Marinković S.S., Dimitrijević-Branković S.I.</b> Biological Treatment of Colored Wastewater by <i>Streptomyces fulvissimus</i> CKS 7	<b>429</b>
<b>Dlangamandla C., Dyantyi S.A., Mpentshu Y.P., Ntwampe S.K.O., Basitere M.</b> Optimization of Bioflocculant Production by a Biofilm forming Microorganism from Poultry Wastewater for Use in Poultry Wastewater Treatment	<b>436</b>
<b>Drewnowski J., Remiszewska-Skwarek A.</b> The Simulation of Activated Sludge System for Optimization of Predictive Aeration at large WWTP	<b>442</b>
<b>Düppenbecker B., Cornel P.</b> Anaerobic Treatment of Sulfate-Containing Municipal Wastewater with a Fluidized Bed Reactor at 20 °C	<b>453</b>
<b>Fox S., Clifford E.</b> Simplified Real Time Control of Small Scale Wastewater Treatment Systems	<b>461</b>
<b>Gulshin I.A.</b> Simultaneous Denitrification and Nitrification in the Lab-scale Oxidation Ditch with Low C/N Ratio	<b>469</b>
<b>Hrytsyna O.</b> The Change Dynamics of the Denitrifying Microorganisms Concentration in the Process of Wastewater Treatment	<b>475</b>
<b>Husemann J., Tanaskovic D., Steinmetz H.</b> Does Serbia need Own Design Guidelines for Wastewater Treatment Plants? Case Study ‘‘East Srem’’	<b>482</b>

<b>Inglezakis V.J., Malamis S., Omirkhan A., Nauruzbayeva J., Makhtayeva Z., Seidakhmetov T., Kudarova A., Abirov A.A., Serikbayev N.S.</b> Activity Testing of Recycle Activated Sludge (RAS) from the Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant of Astana, Kazakhstan	<b>490</b>
<b>Jaromin-Gleń K., Piotrowicz A., Drewnowski J., Łagód G.</b> Modelling of Different Aeration Modes influencing Processes in SBR Bioreactor	<b>496</b>
<b>Kerimbaeva G. and Ugurlu A.</b> Remediation of Uranium Contaminated Water by Anaerobic Microorganisms	<b>505</b>
<b>Kolaković S., Mihajlović I., Tašin S., Brborić M., Pap S., Ubavin D., Đogo M.</b> Comparative Physico-Chemical Analysis of Wastewater Samples in Aleksandrovac, Serbia	<b>516</b>
<b>Kruglikova A.V.</b> Impact of Environment on Sewage Temperature in Open Sewage Treatment Facilities	<b>524</b>
<b>Mattioli A., Gatti G.B., Mattiuzzi. G.P., Bolzonella D., Cecchi F.</b> Full Scale Anaerobic Co-Digestion of Wastewater Sludge and Separately collected Biowaste: a Way toward Energy Independence of Wastewater Treatment Plants	<b>531</b>
<b>Milojković I., Despotović J., Karanović I.</b> Model for Maintenance of Sewerage System based on Inspection	<b>538</b>
<b>Mpongwana N., Mpentshu Y.P., Dyantyi S.A., Ntwampe S.K.O., Mekuto L., Akinpelu E.A., Basitere M.</b> Isolation of High-Salinity-Tolerant Bacterial strains for Nitrification and Aerobic Denitrification under Cyanogenic Conditions	<b>544</b>
<b>Nedeljković A., Kostić D., Branisavljević</b> Willingness to Pay for Improved Wastewater Services on Zapadna Morava River Basin	<b>552</b>
<b>Nemshilova M., Matyushenko E., Razgonyaeva K.</b> Wastewater Treatment in a Submerged Membrane Bioreactor	<b>559</b>
<b>Otto N., Platz S., Fink T., Menzel U.</b> Application of Coarse-Grained Powdered Activated Carbon for Improved Separation with Hydrocyclone Classifiers after Elimination of Organic Micropollutants from Wastewater	<b>565</b>
<b>Pelivanoski B., John P.</b> Improved Nitrification by Separation of Heterotrophic and Nitrifying Microorganisms Based on Two Different Bio Carrier Materials	<b>573</b>

<b>Ráduly B., Gyenge L., Szilveszter Sz., Varga O., Crognale S.</b> Treatment of Corn Ethanol Distillery Wastewater using Two-Stage Anaerobic Digestion	<b>581</b>
<b>Radzenka A.V., Makarau D.V., Vostrova R.N.</b> The Using of Cassettes with the Carrier of Biomass for the Intensification of the Processes, Biological Wastewater Treatment	<b>589</b>
<b>Samchenko D., Kochetov G.</b> Enhancement of the Ferritisation Method for Nickel-Containing Wastewater Treatment	<b>597</b>
<b>Sobotka D., Czerwionka K., Makinia J.</b> Inhibition of the Granular Anammox Process by the High Concentration of Free Ammonia	<b>604</b>
<b>Spasojević J., Rončević S., Maletić S., Molnar Jazić J., Kragulj Isakovski M., Grgić M., Dalmacija B.</b> Predicting the PAH Bioavailability of Phenanthrene using 2-hydroxypropyl- $\beta$ -cyclodextrin	<b>610</b>
<b>Sremački M., Stošić M., Radonić J., Turk Sekulić M., Živančev N.</b> Meat Processing Industry Wastewater – Screening Analysis	<b>616</b>
<b>Surmeli R.O., Bayrakdar A., Molaey R., Çalli B.</b> Removal and Recovery of Ammonia from Chicken Manure: Improving Biomethane Potential	<b>623</b>
<b>Yantsen O.V.</b> Waste Water Treatment on Biofilters with Alternating Aerobic and Anaerobic Zones	<b>632</b>
<b>Zekker I., Rikmann E., Tenno T., Loorits L., Vabamäe P., Mandel A., Raudkivi M., Daija L., Mihkelson J., Kroon K., Tenno T.</b> Nitrogen Removal In Cold (9° C) Anammox Biofilm System	<b>637</b>
<b>Zydorczyk S., Schmuck S., Kerpen K., Mietzel T.</b> Removal of Micro Pollutants by using Green Algae	<b>644</b>

## “Blooming” Reservoir Response to a High Inflow Event - Case Study: the Vrutci Reservoir (Western Serbia)

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### Abstract

The influence of a high flood event on the population of potentially toxic cyanobacteria *Planktothrix rubescens* (DeCandolle ex Gomont) Anagnostidis & Komárek in the Vrutci Reservoir (Western Serbia) was investigated in the presented work. In December 2013, intensive bloom of potentially toxic cyanobacteria *P. rubescens*, took place in a multipurpose reservoir Vrutci. After a high precipitation event in May 2014, almost 25% of reservoir water were replenished with a runoff from the watershed area. High rate of water exchange flushed out phytoplankton significantly, reducing its abundance. Intensive mixing led to a more uniform distribution of all water quality indices over the depth. High inflow caused strong horizontal advective flow which pushed the vast of the phytoplankton population closer to the dam (sampling location Vodozahvat). At the same time torrential tributaries introduced additional amounts of nutrients from catchment which is prone to the pluvial erosion. In spite the decrease in overall algae abundance, *P. rubescens* retained its dominance in the phytoplankton community.

### Keywords

Cyanobacterial bloom; flood event; multipurpose reservoirs

## INTRODUCTION

Lake and reservoir ecology is strongly influenced by sporadic and intense events such as flood events and storms (Tartari, 2005). Due to this influence, the ecological behaviour of a lake (or reservoir) can be understood as an array of multiple impulses, rather than as a continuous process (Spiegel and Imberger, 1987). The phytoplankton community in reservoirs is highly influenced by high flow-through events due to nutrient and light limitations and direct algae flushing (Tartari, 2005; Vanni et al., 2005; Reichwaldt and Ghadouani, 2012; Rolland et al. 2013).

The influence of a high flood event on the population of potentially toxic cyanobacteria *Planktothrix rubescens* (DeCandolle ex Gomont) Anagnostidis & Komárek in the Vrutci Reservoir (Western Serbia) was investigated in this research. *P. rubescens* is one of the most studied organisms among filamentous cyanobacteria, primarily due to early seasonal occurrence (can lead to a flowering of water in winter) and impressive visual appearance when flowering, but also because it can inflict a lot of damage if appear and “bloom“ in lakes that are used for water supply (Dokulil and Teubner, 2011). This species is stenotherm, largely distributed in middle European cold waters (Reynolds, 1984) and Southern sub-alpine lakes (Garibaldi et al., 2000). Mass occurrence of *P. rubescens* have been recorded in the metalimnion of oligo-mesotrophic lakes that are often used as drinking water supplies (Loizzio et al., 1988; Barco et al., 2004). In relation to other cyanobacteria *Planktothrix* spp. have been shown to contain the highest concentrations of microcystin per unit mass of dry weight (Fastner et al., 1999b). The mass occurrence of *P. rubescens* can be ascribed to efficient regulation of buoyancy via semi-permeable gas vesicles as well as production of photopigments enabling maximum utilisation of light energy and existence

under low light conditions (allophycocyanin, phycocyanin and phycoerythrin) (Feuillade, 1994; Walsby and Schanz, 2002). Due to these capabilities, *P. rubescens* is usually located in compact metalimnetic layers overshadowed by the epilimnic community during summer stratification, and can grow under low light conditions during spring and autumn circulations or even below an ice cover during the winter (Blikstad-Halstvedt et al., 2007). Moreover, it has the physiological advantage as it is capable to utilize organic compounds of phosphorous in the absence of phosphates (Feuillade, 1994).

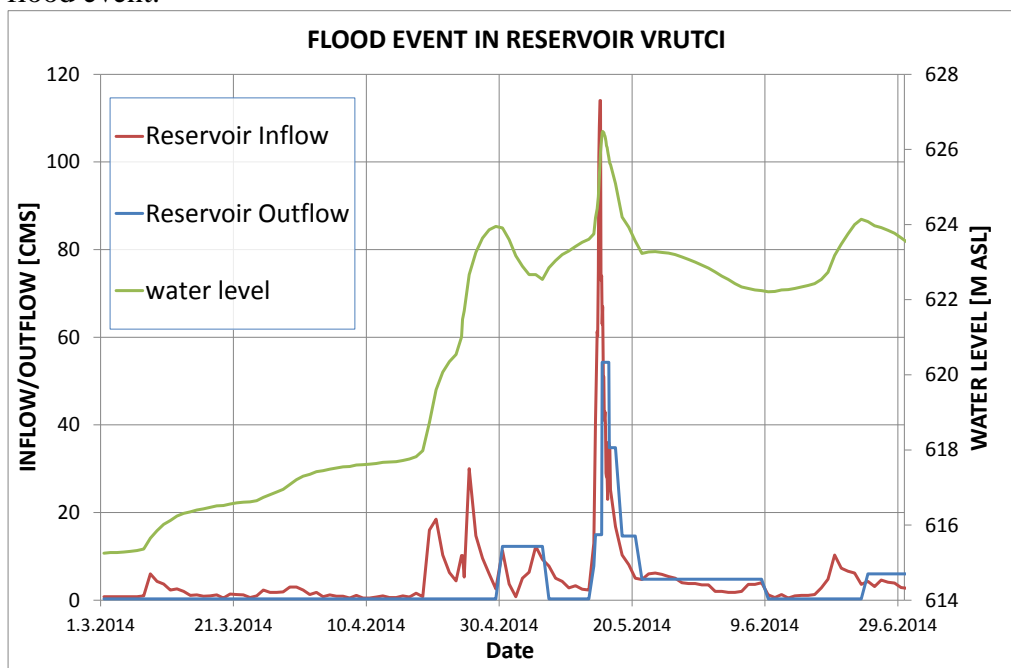
## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Study Site and Case Scenario

The Vrutci Reservoir (43° 50' 34" N, 19° 41' 36" E), is a multipurpose reservoir on the River Djetinja in Western Serbia. It was formed in 1984, by damming river Djetinja for the purposes of: water supply, flood protection, sediment control and low flow enrichment. It is the main potable water source for the City of Uzice, the surrounding settlements and the local industry. Normal operational water table level is at the 621 m a.s.l. altitude and the reservoir has the total volume of 54 milion cubic meters. Residence time is approximately 400 days. Watershed has the area of 160 sqare kilometers and is rarely populated. Inspite the fact that reservoir Vrutci has been in use for almost 30 years it has been exploited without utilization permission due to the absense of antierosion dams on torrential tributaries.

In December 2013, a severe *P. rubescens* bloom occurred in the reservoir and caused disruption of the regular water supply for more than 40 days. In the past, water quality of reservoir Vrutci was monitored once a year or once in a two years. Lack of comprehensive water quality database makes all today *a posteriori* analysis of the bloom triggers very difficult with high level of uncertainty.

An intensive flood event occurred between May 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, when 110 mm of rainfall was recorded on the watershed during four consecutive days. Approximately 25% of the reservoir water was replenished. Diagrams on Figure 1, depicts water budget of reservoir Vrutci before, after and durrig the flood event.

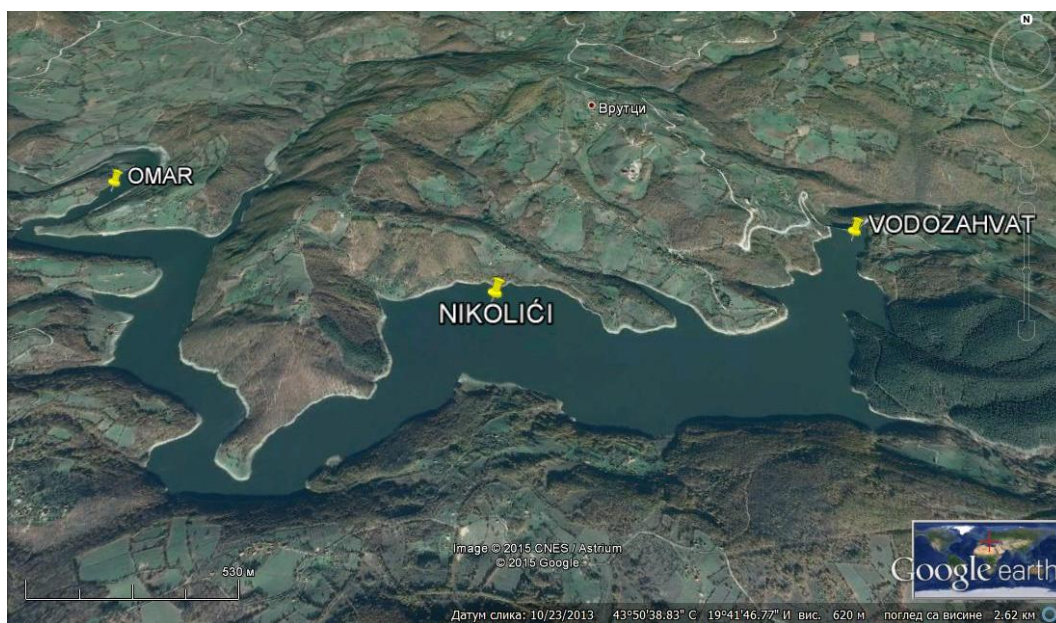


**Figure 1.** Water budget components: Inflow, Outflow and Water Level (Volume) of Vrutci before, during and after the flood event.

### Sample collection in the field and Laboratory Measurements

After the cyanobacterial bloom in December 2013, University of Belgrade (Faculty of Civil Engineering and Faculty of Biology) has established water quality monitoring of the reservoir Vrutci on the monthly basis under the national grant TR37009 (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Serbia). Monitoring consists from measurements of the basic water quality indices by the aid of multiparameter probe and from phytoplankton analysis. Phytoplankton is sampled on three locations (Figure 1), while water quality profiling is being done on the two additional locations. Before water sampling for quantitative and qualitative phytoplankton analysis, vertical profiles of basic water quality indices were sampled with multiparameter probe (YSI 6600V2-2). Multiparameter probe is capable to sample and logg few parameters at the time: water temperature, actual depth, conductivity, pH, TDS, DO concentration, DO saturation and Chlorophyll a. In the case of the appereance of peaks on the vertical profile of Chl a, water samples were taken from that particular depth, otherwise samples were taken randomly over the depth, but at least with 5 meter increments.

Composite samples for qualitative analyses of phytoplankton were collected with a plankton net (30 cm mouth, mesh size 22-23  $\mu\text{m}$ ), while samples for quantitative analyses were collected using Ruttner bottle (volume 1 L). Samples were placed in a flasks and preserved with Lugol's solution. The algal taxa were identified with the aid of the Karl Zeiss Imager M1 AvioCam MRc5 light microscope using standard keys. The total abundance of phytoplankton was determined by the Utermöhl method (Utermöhl, 1958) on Leica inverted light microscope and expressed as number of individuals per mililiter (ind/mL) and as a number of cells per mililiter (cell/mL). Estimates of species cell mass/volume were adopted from the literature and expressed as biomass (mg/L).



**Figure 2.** Water sampling positions: Vodozahvat, Nikolici and Omar marked with placeholders on the Google map

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Qualitative analysis of phytoplankton

There is a mixed community of algae and cyanobacteria in phytoplankton of reservoir Vrutci. Phytoplankton are characterized by low diversity of taxa and the dominant presence of cyanobacteria *Planktothrix rubescens*, Table 1. The presence of seven phyla was determined: Cyanobacteria, Bacillariophyta, Chlorophyta, Euglenophyta, Cryptophyta, Dinophyta and

Chrysophyta. The same number of species were determined in April and in May (22 species). The greatest diversity is represented in Chlorophyta (7 taxa), while the lowest at under Chrysophyta (2 taxa). Diversity of algae is uniform. There is no significant difference in phytoplankton composition between April and May 2014.

**Table 1.** Qualitative composition of phytoplankton in reservoir Vruci in April and May 2014

Phylum	Taxa	April	May
<b>Cyanobacteria</b>	<i>Aphanocapsa holsatica</i> (Lemmermann) G.Cronberg & Komárek	+	+
	<i>Aphanothece clathrata</i> West & G.S.West	+	+
	<i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i> (Lemmermann) J.Komárková-Legnerová & G.Cronberg	+	
	<i>Planktothrix rubescens</i> (De Candolle ex Gomont) Anagnostidis & Komárek	+	+
<b>Bacillariophyta</b>	<i>Cyclotella comta</i> (Ehrenberg) Kützing	+	+
	<i>Cyclotella ocellata</i> Pantocsek	+	+
	<i>Fragilaria crotonensis</i> Kitton	+	+
	<i>Fragilaria ulna</i> var. <i>angustissima</i> (Grunow) Krammer & Lange-Bertalot	+	+
	<i>Nitzschia acicularis</i> (Kützing) W.Smith		+
	<i>Pinnularia</i> Eh. sp.	+	
<b>Chlorophyta</b>	<i>Chlamydomonas</i> Ehrenberg sp.	+	+
	<i>Monoraphidium arcuatum</i> (Korshikov) Hindák	+	
	<i>Monoraphidium griffithii</i> (Berkeley) Komárková-Legnerová		+
	<i>Monoraphidium indicum</i> Hindák		+
	<i>Monoraphidium minutum</i> (Nägeli) Komárková-Legnerová	+	+
	<i>Oocystis marssonii</i> Lemmermann	+	+
	<i>Tetraedron minimum</i> (A.Braun) Hansgirg	+	+
<b>Euglenophyta</b>	<i>Trachelomonas oblonga</i> Lemmermann	+	+
	<i>Trachelomonas volvocina</i> (Ehrenberg) Ehrenberg	+	+
<b>Cryptophyta</b>	<i>Cryptomonas erosa</i> Ehrenberg	+	+
	<i>Cryptomonas marssonii</i> Skuja		+
	<i>Rhodomonas minuta</i> var. <i>nannoplanctica</i> H.Skuja	+	+
<b>Dinophyta</b>	<i>Gymnodinium helveticum</i> Penard	+	
	<i>Sphaerodinium cinctum</i> (Ehr.) Wol.	+	+
	<i>Woloszinskia coronata</i> Thompson	+	
<b>Chrysophyta</b>	<i>Dinobryon divergens</i> O.E.Imhof	+	+
	<i>Kephyrion litorale</i> Lund		+

### Quantitative analysis of phytoplankton

Population of *P. rubescens* almost exclusively dominated in communities of phytoplankton. There is insignificant presence of other algae comparing with representatives of cyanobacteria. In the case of the number of individuals, silicate and green algae have the greatest abundance, but their share in the number of cells and total biomass is insignificant, Figure 3 and Figure 4. All given results are related to the measurement location Vodozahvat in the close vicinity of the dam.

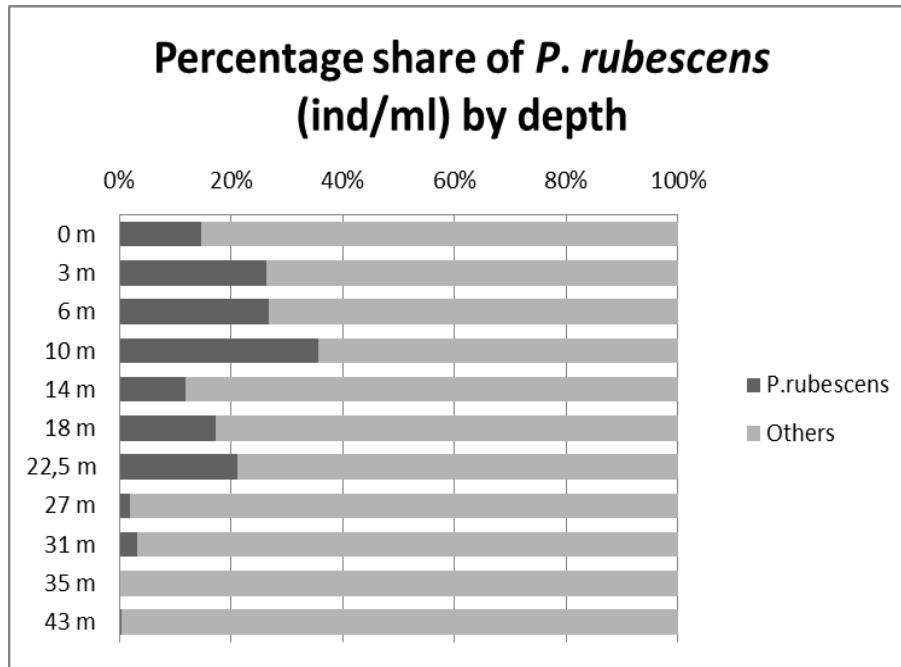


Figure 3. Percentage share of *P. rubescens* (individuals per milliliter) by depth in April of 2014

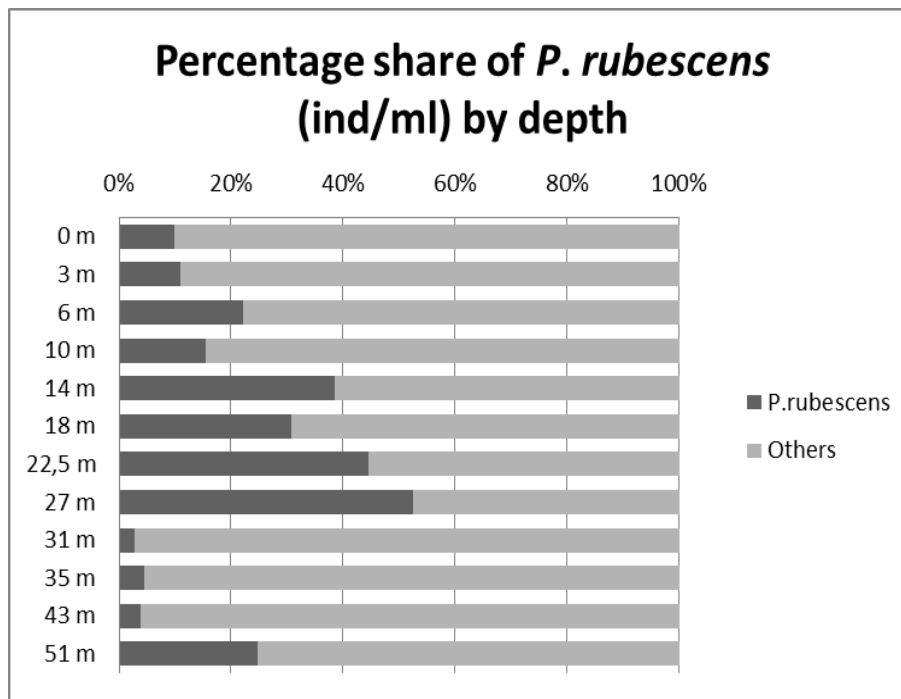
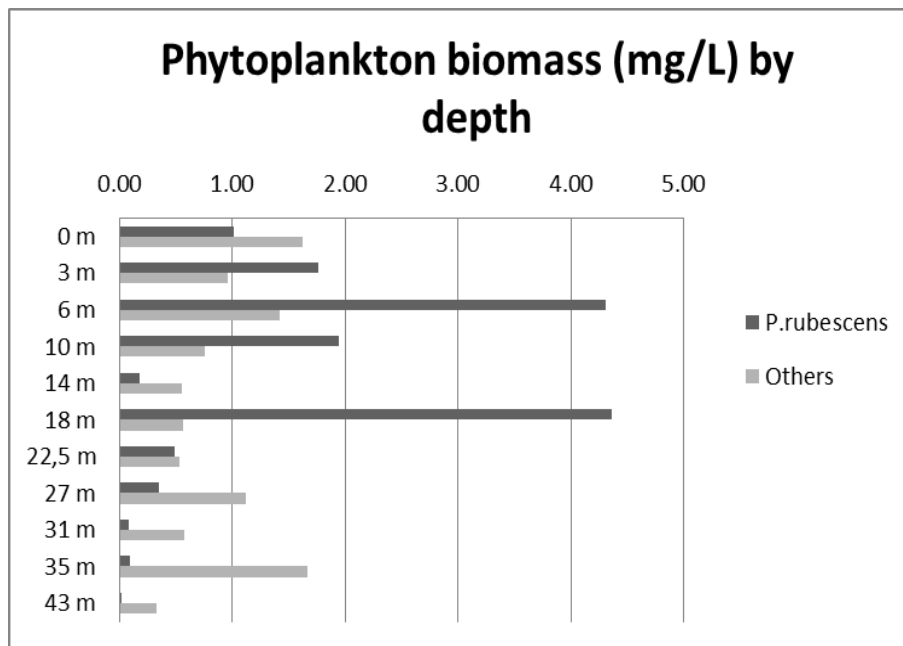


Figure 4. Percentage share of *P. rubescens* (individuals per milliliter) by depth in May 2014

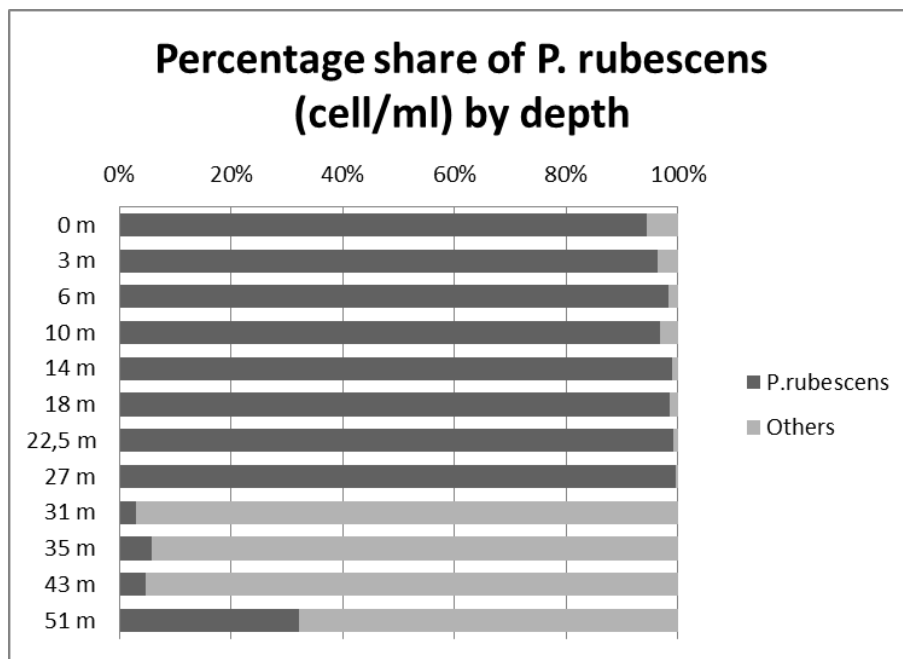
April 2014. *P. rubescens* cells have the greatest number along the entire vertical profile of reservoir, except for the deepest parts (over 30 m) (Fig. 2). At these depths the presence of coccal, colonial cyanobacteria *Aphanocapsa holstica* (Lemmermann) G.Cronberg & Komárek and *Aphanothece clathrata* West & G.S.West was recorded. The dominance of *P. rubescens* can be best seen if we look at the vertical profile of the phytoplankton biomass. High concentration of potentially toxic *P. rubescens* at 6 meters depth is obvious, where its biomass was 4,31 µg/L (Figure 5).

May of 2014. After the flood event in May of 2014, the decrease in overall phytoplankton abundance was significant. However, *P. rubescens* cells remained dominant along the entire profile,

(except at the great depths, over 30 m) but now have an uniform distribution (Figure 6). There is a great number of its cells at all depths. The maximum abundance of *P. rubescens* was observed at the depth of 3 m, where its biomass was 2,90 µg/L (Figure. 7).



**Figure 5.** Biomass of *P. rubescens* and others by depth (mg/L) in April of 2014

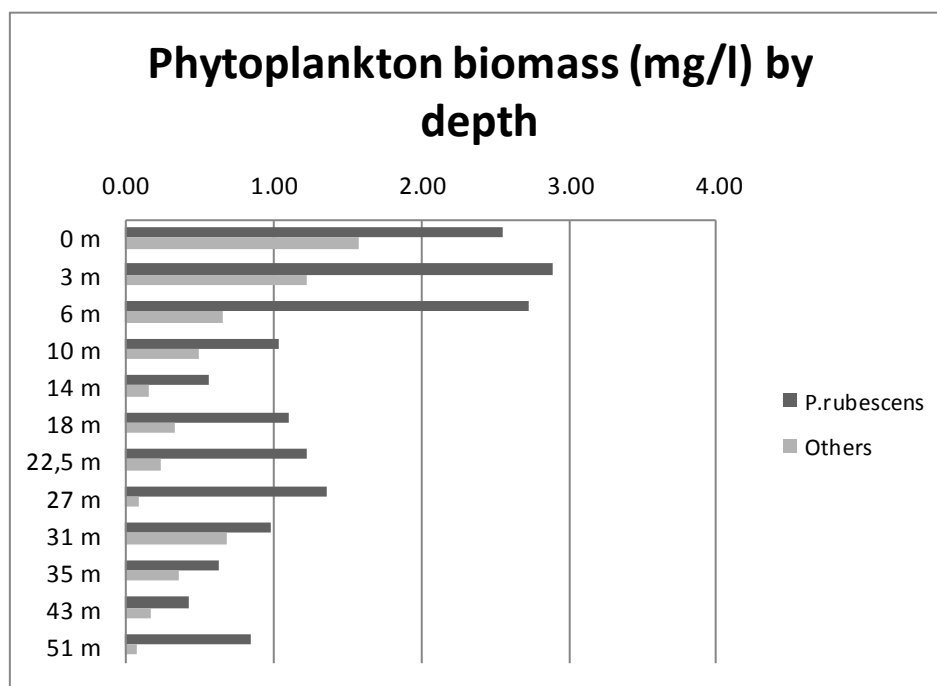


**Figure 6.** Percentage share of *P. rubescens* (cells per milliliter) by depth in May of 2014

**CONCLUSIONS**

Lake and reservoir ecology is strongly influenced by sporadic and intense events such as flood events and storms. In this research significant influence of the high inflow event to the phytoplankton community in reservoir Vrutci has been proven. High rate of water exchange flushed out phytoplankton significantly, reducing its abundance. Intensive mixing lead to a more uniform distribution of all water quality indices over the depth. High inflow caused strong horizontal

advective flow which pushed the vast of the phytoplankton population closer to the dam (sampling location Vodozahvat). At the same time torrential tributaries introduced additional amounts of nutrients from catchment which is prone to the pluvial erosion. In spite the decrease in overall algae abundance, *P. rubescens* retained its dominance in the phytoplankton community.



**Figure 7.** Biomass of *P. rubescens* and others by depth (mg/L) in May of 2014.

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