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Flood risk management and tipping points - local adaptation, planning and implementation: A case study about the EU Floods Directive 2007

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In recent years, environmental change along with natural disasters has become an increasingly discussed topic among scientists and practitioners. Climate change and its possible impacts are assessed carefully, as increasing threats to society as well as the environment are likely outcomes in the near future. Additionally, dynamics in settlement and population growth might influence the occurrence of natural hazards. The pressure to intensify land-use, but also to keep free spaces is ambivalent. Hence, flood risk management is of high relevance in the region, in particular since the implementation of the EU Floods Directive. The concept of tipping points, defined as a turning point for system change, has been applied in our study to relate aspects of change to the implementation of the EU Floods Directive. The paper used semi-structured interviews to assess if the EU Floods Directive can be seen as a trigger for adjustments in flood risk management in Austria. Assessing the main findings, it became clear that developments were not triggered by the implementation of the EU Floods Directive, but rather by external factors and a general need for action. Changes related to the EU Floods Directive are bound to happen on a long-term scale, however, cannot be determined yet. Possible difficulties still exist regarding transparency and communication with the broad, yet affected society. So far, the requirements of the first policy-cycle have been fulfilled. The second policy-cycle will show further potential needs and outcomes.