

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

PLUNGE INTO THE DEBATE

Conference Report

2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE

2-3 April 2009

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Rue de la Loi 170

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Your water, your life
Plunge into the debate!

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http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index_en.htm

Conference webpage: Presentations, webstreaming videos, conference background document, speaker biographies, all available at:

<http://water.europa.eu/participate>





1. INTRODUCTION

2009 is an important year for European water policy. The Water Framework Directive (WFD)¹ requires that Member States establish the first River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for all 110 river basin districts across the EU by the end of the year, which include specific measures to ensure that all EU waters reach good status by 2015.

In the preparatory process to establish these RBMPs, Member States are required to ensure transparency and public participation and to encourage the active involvement of all interested stakeholders. According to Article 14 of the WFD, for each river basin district Member States had to publish and make available the following documents to the public for comments:

- A timetable and work programme for the production of the RBMP, including a statement on the planned consultation measures (*by the end of 2006*);
- An interim overview of the significant water management issues in the river basin district (*by the end of 2007*); and
- A draft version of the RBMP (*by the end of 2008*).

The European Commission published a new Flash Eurobarometer on water in March 2009, which indicated that EU citizens are greatly concerned about the water environment.² Although on average few of the citizens polled were aware of consultations on the draft RBMPs, which had to start at the end of December 2008, many expressed a wish to be active and express their opinions.

In this context, the European Water Conference 2009, which took place on 2-3 April 2009 in Brussels, aimed to encourage the active involvement of citizens and stakeholders and draw maximum attention to the preparations of the RBMPs. The European Commission invited decision makers and interested parties from across the EU to this event to discuss strategic water management issues and to give first feedback on the draft RBMPs.

A background document was prepared for the conference, including an initial analysis of the draft RBMPs that were available at the start of 2009. Most sessions started with a presentation on the first informal analysis of the draft RBMPs, after which different viewpoints were expressed by Member States, different water users and water service providers as well as environmental NGOs.

The conference showed that participation can work and that it can and should make a difference. The conference also showed that it is valuable to hold public discussions to balance the interests between different sectors, authorities and other stakeholders.

The European Water Conference 2009 was organised and hosted by the Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission. 425 participants from 26 EU Member States participated in the conference, 42 speakers gave wide-ranging points of view and 29 exhibitors presented material about sustainable water management. The conference was also web-streamed and panellists responded to questions submitted (by virtual participants) via the web.

This report summarises the political speeches, presentations and discussions held at this 2-day event as well as the key messages (section 2).

The presentations held by the speakers as well as the videos, which can be viewed in the five conference languages (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES), can be downloaded from the links in the conference programme (Annex II). This conference report and more information on the consultations in the river basin districts across the EU are available at: <http://water.europa.eu/participate>.

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy. OJ L327, 22.12.2000, p.1.

² Flash EB Series #261 Flash Eurobarometer on water conducted by The Gallup Organisation, Hungary upon the request of Directorate General Environment.



2. KEY MESSAGES

This summary reflects the key messages expressed in the conference but does not necessarily reflect the view of all participants.

Thinking beyond the water “box”


1. Water management is affected by many other policies. Therefore, it is important to look at the impact of economic activities on water and to coordinate with a number of sectors including agriculture, industry, energy production, tourism etc. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) and its focus on integrated river basin management plans is one approach to enhance sectoral coordination.
2. Since many important water decisions are not made by water managers, it is important to involve all stakeholders in the WFD management process in order to provide the proper answers to water related issues.

Public participation in the river basin planning process

3. More transparency is needed in the preparation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) to improve public participation. The draft RBMPs should be fully accessible in the Member States so that everyone can discuss and contribute to their development.
4. Environmental education is a prerequisite to ensure effective public consultation.
5. A key challenge of the process is to incorporate results of the consultation into the final RBMPs. Comments made by stakeholders and the public should be taken into account to improve the acceptance of decisions made.

What will the River Basin Management Plans deliver? The challenge of 2015

6. There is an EU north-south divide in terms of publishing the draft RBMPs. There is concern that water issues are not given enough priority in southern Member States, because in this region Member States have not yet published draft RBMPs although the deadline set by the WFD was December 2008.
7. What will be achieved in terms of objectives by 2015 will vary widely across the EU, since Member States have different starting points, different challenges and different levels of ambition in their draft RBMPs.
8. Some Member States have developed relatively comprehensive strategies and already started to identify implementation options. In other Member States, the draft RBMPs are more general. There is concern that some draft RBMPs indicate high levels of ambition in terms of objectives and proposed measures, although the assessment of the relevant costs is not included in all cases. There is a need for a more coherent level of ambition throughout the EU.
9. Exemptions to the environmental objectives of the WFD (especially extensions of deadline) seem to be the rule rather than the exception. Transparency regarding exemptions should be ensured and justifications have to be based on the conditions set out in the WFD. At present, the draft RBMPs do not include detailed information and arguments in all cases.
10. More work needs to be done to communicate more effectively the improvements achieved in the first river basin planning cycle even though many of these do not yet lead to an increase in



ecological status. It is important to communicate to stakeholders that their efforts and contribution are making a difference.

11. Chemical pollution and priority hazardous substances are an important issue for water management. Relevant measures need to be further discussed since treatment facilities alone cannot deliver the expected outcome.

Water and agriculture – a core challenge?


12. Agriculture is a major source of water-related problems. The sector has a large responsibility to reduce pollution at source to (but not only) reduce treatment costs for drinking water. In general, there is concern that farmers consider water quality more of an issue than water quantity. However, water quantity issues will become a major challenge in the future if climate change takes place in several places as predicted.
13. Although the agricultural sector has taken action as set out in the Nitrates Directive³, as well as the Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides⁴, and the Common Agricultural Policy includes several elements to protect waters, several problems remain in many areas.
14. Farmers often produce environmental goods and services but these are not properly valued and therefore not recognized in society. However, farmers also have great responsibility to contribute to sustainable qualitative and quantitative management of water resources (which is a main public good) across the EU. To attain clean and healthy water, a transition is needed towards sustainable agriculture that is able to adapt to natural and changing conditions and also accepts limits in growth.
15. While farmers view the consultation process positively, there are also concerns that the process is proceeding too fast, that there is lack of information and lack of economic analysis of the impacts of proposed measures, in particular on the local level.

Sustainable modifications to the water courses

16. More transparency is needed in the process of designating heavily modified water bodies and in defining good ecological potential.
17. The WFD defines certain conditions for new sustainable modifications (in Article 4.7) which need to be applied in a consistent and transparent manner for all new planned projects in the EU (on navigation, hydropower and other uses). Draft RBMPs, however, included very few references to this article although many projects are being planned across the EU.
18. Although concepts for sustainable navigation have already been developed, in practice there are still concerns about the sustainability of certain new navigation projects in view of WFD requirements. Consultation with all relevant stakeholders can ensure that sustainability and the WFD principles are taken into account.
19. The Renewable Energy Directive⁵ cannot be used as an excuse for not complying with the WFD. All sectors have to share responsibility for the best possible environmental outcome. It is

³ Directive 91/676/EEC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. OJ L375, 31.12.1991, p.1.

⁴ European Parliament legislative resolution of 13 January 2009 on the Council common position for adopting a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides.



necessary to make sure that new hydropower plants and dams are cost-effective, bearing in mind both the WFD and the EU renewable energy targets.

Water pricing: Sending the right price signals on sustainable water use

20. Much work remains to be done to ensure that future water pricing policies contribute to the environmental objectives of the WFD, i.e. they are in line with the polluter-pays principle and provide appropriate incentives for sustainable water use.
21. Fully harmonised water pricing policies throughout Europe is clearly not an objective. In line with the WFD Article 9 requirements, sustainable water pricing policies will also account for local social, economic and environmental conditions.
22. The first informal analysis of the draft RBMPs shows that transparency in the field of water pricing is not yet achieved.
23. Establishing an EU forum for discussing water pricing further might help to give some impetus to the policy debate.

“Emerging” issues in European water management

24. Much less is known about the marine environment than inland water resources. In addition, the use of the marine environment is changing and there is a need to revisit its ecosystem functions. The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, approved in 2008, uses an ecosystem-based approach to manage human activities and to integrate marine concerns into other policy fields, e.g. agriculture.
25. In addition, climate change will have implications across the EU. There are several solutions and adaptation measures to reduce the effects of climate change ranging from traditional methods (e.g. increase storage through dams) to green infrastructure (e.g. salt marshes). No-regret action should be taken now. Ecosystem-based adaptation is often the best and most cost-effective approach.
26. It is important to match the timing of climate change adaptation research and implementation. For better informed decisions, there is a need to downscale methodologies and predictions (from large scale to local scale) to reduce uncertainty from modelling. In addition, adaptive water management should deal with uncertainty not only in terms of predicted figures but also in terms of what uncertainty due to climate change means to different stakeholders.

⁵ Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC. OJ L 140/16, 5.6.2009, p.14.

3. OPENING SPEECHES

Chair: Mr Peter GAMMELTOFT, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG ENV.D.2 "Protection of Water and the Marine Environment"

Welcome and opening of the conference – "Promoting active and transparent involvement at the EU level" - Mr Jos DELBEKE, Deputy Director General, DG Environment, European Commission

In his welcoming speech, the Deputy Director General of DG Environment referred to the recent Eurobarometer survey on water (published in March 2009). According to the Eurobarometer, almost 2/3 of European citizens feel that water quality is a serious problem in their countries and an equal number worry about the quantity of water. The challenge is to manage this resource, both in terms of quality and quantity, sustainably.



On the other hand, many of the surveyed Europeans were not yet aware of the recent ongoing WFD public consultations (an exception is Poland, which has the highest percentage of the surveyed population already aware of the consultations). The Eurobarometer also revealed that there is high public motivation to participate in this WFD consultation process.

The Deputy Director General also emphasized that this conference provides a forum for EU stakeholder debate as it is taking place in the middle of the ongoing consultation on the WFD draft river basin management plans (RBMPs). Public information and consultation matters to the European



Commission because it is one of the core obligations foreseen in the WFD and gives the direct right to the public and interested parties to get involved in future policy making. In this context, the European Commission has set up a central webpage with all key MS consultation documents. The Deputy Director General finally announced that the European Commission is now preparing for the large task of compliance checking of the RBMPs.

Keynote speech - Mr Richard SEEBER, MEP, European Parliament

Mr Richard Seeber MEP (AT/PPE) emphasized the issue of climate change, referring to the new White Paper of the European Commission⁶. Climate change impacts on water (floods, water stress) have changed the context of the Water Framework Directive. Recent floods were related to high



losses in terms of human lives and economic costs across Europe but also water stress has inflicted many costs. It should not be forgotten that mitigating climate change also has to include water-related measures.

Mr. Seeber referred to the recent 3rd UN Water Development Report, which concluded that many important water decisions are not made by water managers but by other stakeholders. The water community should thus step out of the water "box" and adopt a broader perspective.

A new model of water management is needed to move away from traditional, supply-oriented approaches. The EU Floods Directive⁷ already provides important tools for flood risk management. Land use planning will also have to find a different approach in the future and soil policy should be more encouraged in the Member

⁶ European Commission. 1.4.2009. White Paper: Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action COM(2009) 147 final.

⁷ Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks, OJ L288, 6.11.2007, p.27.

States. There are also several tools to regulate demand, e.g. consumer awareness, and obsolete irrigation practices should be overcome. On the issue of inefficient water use, investments in new technology are needed to tackle aging infrastructure which is responsible for considerable water losses. In addition, fair water pricing is a key tool of the WFD for the sustainable allocation of water resources.

Finally, Mr. Seeber noted that the EU has a global responsibility to find solutions to freshwater problems and to promote sustainable water management also outside Europe. Especially water scarcity is far from being a European problem only. In the future, water will be increasingly at the centre of international conflicts. Transboundary water management is thus a key political-security issue which can contribute to enhanced cooperation between countries.

Keynote speech – Mr Karel BLÁHA, Deputy Minister for the Environment, Czech Republic

The Czech Deputy Minister for the Environment referred to subsidiarity as an important principle for MS to achieve similar EU goals and should be kept in mind when implementing the WFD.

The Czech Republic experienced big flood disasters in 1997. These floods caused huge damages but also offered many lessons. Therefore, during the 2002 floods, the Czech Republic was better prepared to tackle the consequences.

At the recent 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, there were many comments on the issue of access to clean water and sanitation as a basic human right. This item should be put high on the political agenda. At the same time, the Deputy Minister emphasized that water is very costly. In the EU, the political will to put the water issue high on the agenda is driven by the necessity to comply with the WFD. However, policy makers also have to find a way to better reach the public. Public participation should not be viewed only in terms of meeting an official requirement as it also has positive consequences on all of us.



Finally, the Deputy Minister emphasized that all sectors need to be involved in the general debate, since challenges like climate change cannot be resolved by the water sector alone.



4. SUMMARIES OF THE CONFERENCE SESSIONS

4.1 Public participation in the planning process – State of play

“Introduction on the implementation of the WFD and importance of public participation – result of the survey on consultation” - Mr Benoit Grandmougin, ACTeon

The WFD requirement (Article 14) to consult the public and interested parties has led to one of the largest public consultation processes in the EU. To get an initial impression on how Member States (MS) implemented Article 14, a survey was undertaken on consultation activities carried out in the River Basin Districts.

Although the Directive set a deadline (22.12.2008) for the start of the consultations on the draft River Basin Management Plans (dRBMPs), providing for a synchronised deadline, the duration of consultation periods varied among MS. Consultations have not started for several MS (AT, CY, DK, EL, most of ES, IT, parts of LT, MT, PT, SI) and for some the starting date was even not known (DK, EL, ES, IT, MT, PT, SI). SE only started consultations in the weeks prior to the conference and AT announced a start just after the conference. In several MS, pre-consultation activities took place through existing committees, local meetings and working groups, which helped to detect underlying conflicts in 50% of river basin districts (RBDs). To enable public participation during the consultation process, some RBDs provided background information and a short synthesis on the RBMP and its Programme of Measures (POMs). 60% of RBD provided a geographic synthesis to help local inhabitants visualize WFD impacts on the environment.

MS used a wide range of active and passive tools to facilitate the consultation process. The most frequent tool used during the consultation on the workprogramme (WP), the significant water management issues (SWMI) and the RBMPs were websites. Local meetings and documents with public access were used more during the WP and the SWMI consultations. To draw attention to the dRBMPs, radio and TV spots were more often used. Innovative approaches and tools used by MS include communications tools (e.g. web based mapping tools), fun activities (e.g. “Danube day”) and “direct contact” tools (e.g. Blue ambassadors).

As a result of the consultation process, 20% of the WPs were changed and 47% of the SWMI documents were adapted. Furthermore, the consultations helped to raise public awareness of water issues, establish new contacts between stakeholders and enhance acceptance of the results.

WISE

First feedbacks...

- **Consultation has helped in:**
 - Raising public awareness on water issues
 - Improving draft documents
 - Establishing new contacts between stakeholders and improving coordination between institutions
 - Enhancing acceptance of the results



Session II - Benoit Grandmougin, ACTeon (France)
2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE, 2-3 APRIL 2009
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"Public Consultation in France - state of the art and good practices 2009 " - Mr Jean-Claude VIAL, Deputy Water Director, France



River basin districts in France have all taken similar approaches to public consultation. The main tools used at district level are questionnaires by post and by internet. To advertise the questionnaire different media tools were used such

To summarize the national results

Relative willingness to pay

- Agree to finance the water policy a bit more ... but not necessarily via the water bill
- Overwhelming preference for the application of the polluter pays principle

Pollutions and scarcity, top priority subjects

- Farming and industrial pollution in first place
- Major interest in price of water, quantitative issues and water savings
- Less interest in environmental issues

as a communication campaign or a public meeting. The questionnaires included the following topics: validity of results and actions suggested; prioritization of actions; agreed effort for oneself; willingness to pay to achieve objectives; main concerns about water; and desired methods of information. Three types or "circles of stakeholders" were involved in the consultation process: members of river basin committees and geographical commissions (involved during a three year period); the local public through questionnaires over the course of 6 months; and local and national committees of elected representatives at the end of the public consultation for 4 months.

Nearly 28 million questionnaires were sent out with around 400,000 responses including 7% from electronic responses. The rate of response varied among districts from .6% to 4.1%. Results of the questionnaires indicate a range of water priorities. Agriculture pollution is the greatest priority followed by industrial pollution. Water pricing, quantitative issues and water savings are also of high interest, but there is less interest in other environmental issues. Furthermore, the results show that while the public is willing to finance water policy more, the majority overwhelmingly prefers the "polluter pays" approach.

The major proposals or outcomes of the public consultation process are now being integrated in the revised RBMPs and programmes of measures (POMs) until the end of 2009. Furthermore, the results of the public consultation will be included in an additive document to the RBMP. The consultation process will end with its final stage of consulting local committees, which will review the results of the public consultation.

"European environmental NGOs - lessons learnt from consultations" - Mr John HONTELEZ Secretary General, European Environment Bureau

Consultation in the river basin planning process is necessary to ensure transparency about "where we are now, what options we have, which ones are proposed and why" and to manage expectations. Transparency is essential as water management suffers from bad public relations and only 9% of EU citizens trust their governments on environmental information.



Results from the consultations on Significant Water Management Issues (SWMIs) shows that there are observed improvements, but there is still a lack of involvement in consultations and it is unclear what impact consultations have on the drafting of final documents. In most cases SWMIs were identified without a clear and transparent procedure; some countries did have criteria and cut off thresholds.

With respect to consultation in river basin planning, in 11 surveyed cases consultations explain how participation will change the plans but in 5 surveyed cases no such information is provided.



What needs to happen?



- Provide key figures about objectives, measures and budgets in a simple understandable way to the public
- Feedback about consultation results including explanation how results have changed the final plans.
- Explain how confident you are about the effectiveness of the proposed measures.
- Provide clarity about distribution of costs, who will pay and, even more importantly, who will get a free ride.



Furthermore, little information is provided regarding proposed measures and objectives and the designation of HMWB has been for the most part not transparent. Providing possibilities for stakeholder involvement is also weak in some Member States. However, some good examples exist of Member States (e.g. Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands) undertaking transparent consultations. These Member States effectively involved stakeholders (including following NGO input) and provided comprehensive information on objectives, exemptions and measures.

In order to improve transparency of public consultations, complete information about objectives, measures and budgets is needed that the public can understand. Feedback about consultation results and how results have changed the final plans is also necessary. Furthermore, clarity of distribution of costs and who will pay is essential for transparency in water management. Most importantly, the substance of the draft plans needs to be debated with all stakeholders and policy makers.

"Water managers' perspective ", Mr Sybe SCHAAP, EUWMA

Members (from 8 MS) of the European Union of Water Management Authorities (EUWMA) are responsible for regional and local water management by organising and implementing the WFD. In this context, EUWMA members aim to improve the discussion of river basin planning by developing common work methods and definitions and using an integrated approach based on economic and ecological principles.



The EUWMA sees a number of key elements for successful WFD implementation. Firstly, there needs to be international coordination in developing common methodologies. Secondly, multi-level stakeholder participation to develop the RBMPs and their corresponding programmes of measures (POMs) is essential. Stakeholder participation is also needed in dealing with implementation challenges regarding the identification of Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWB). Finally, the EUWMA proposes the use

of the subsidiarity principle in reporting and organisation. The EUWMA believes that a number of benefits can be realised through the current bottom-up or "local and regional" approach to river basin planning, but this can also be a challenge.

Conclusions

- Successful WFD implementation benefits from efficient public participation and integrated planning
- Regional water authorities and corporations play a key role in planning, implementation and public involvement

Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel members: Jean-Claude VIAL, Deputy Water Director, France; John HONTELEZ Secretary General, European Environment Bureau (EEB); Sybe SCHAAP, EUWMA; Veronica JAGLOVA, Czech Ministry of Environment; Helmut BLÖCH, European Commission, DG ENV D.2

Chair: Philip WELLER, Executive Secretary, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube (ICPDR)

- The initiative to organise this conference, which takes place in the middle of the participation period, was welcomed. To tackle several participation problems faced on the national level, many MS can learn from the International River Commissions how to work better together in expert groups (intervention by the Danube Environmental Forum).
- The Spanish NGO Ebronautas pointed out that more efforts should be done to adapt environmental education to this participation opportunity. Currently, most environmental education is not oriented to participation issues. The French Deputy Water Director replied that the questionnaires in France show what is important for people in terms of priorities. The European Commission panellist added that improving the information given to the public is still a challenge and we need better informed citizens. This cannot happen from Brussels but in a structured way from bottom-to-top and from top-to-bottom. The EEB panellist explained that good environmental education consists of three items: 1) informing children and others on the state of the environment, e.g. on key threats, 2) helping people to become responsible citizens in their own behaviour and 3) educating citizens so that they participate in societal decision making.



- The Thames River Restoration Trust raised the issue that participation should go one step further and some demonstration projects should be started so that stakeholders can work together and show how the WFD implementation can work over the next few years. The French Deputy Water Director agreed that it would be interesting to work on demonstration projects so people have the opportunity to see what has been done with the issues they raised. The European Commission panellist added that sharing good and bad experiences is the basis of the WFD and a cooperative approach from the start of the process is favoured, involving not only countries and the Commission but also stakeholders and NGOs. Pilot projects have already been carried out and if all countries deliver complete programmes of measures by the end of 2009, it will hopefully be easy to select good examples.
- According to the EUWMA panellist, the best way to get people involved is to get the WFD working. In the Netherlands, there has been a lot of interest from the broader population but there a risk that this remains a theoretical interest. However, when we start to implement things and carry out concrete physical work, people get interested. A nice example is the Dutch programme for safety against floods in the Rhine basin which considers WFD and ecological measures. This programme is interesting for the audience and a lot of public involvement is taking place.
- The University of Osnabrück raised the question whether awareness raising leads to a change in the types of questions asked or if it improves the discussion atmosphere.
- The designation of heavily modified water bodies (HMWB) was raised as a frustrating issue, at least for the environmental NGOs. NGOs have been quite engaged in this process but felt cut off the information and the justifications for it. They felt that HMWB designation was an arbitrary process in many cases and that decisions are already made and not open to comments for reconsidering the designation (intervention by think-tank Planet Earth). The EUWMA panellist commented that many HMWB have been made for specific objectives and a long time ago ecology was not part of the decision-making. Concerning interactions with NGOs, things can be done better. In this context, he recommended to decentralize water management to make it more democratic. This will help stakeholders to have direct influence on the policy at regional level. The European Commission panellist added that subsidiarity also has its limitations when a problem does not stop at national boundaries.
- In France, health issues, e.g. linked to pesticides, came out of the consultation as one important issue. The EEB asked how France is going to take these results into account and include them into the river basin management plans. This question was also relevant to a webstreaming question from a Bulgarian international journalism student at Northwestern University, USA, who asked which challenges the media face in covering the ongoing issues such as the water crisis and how media can avoid empty talk and engage the public. The French Deputy Water Director replied that many people raised the issue of drinking water and health in the process. Currently, there are ongoing discussions and meetings with different ministries, including groups of stakeholders. The objective is to cut back the use of pesticides in 10 years and specific action will be determined.
- The NGO Grüne Liga positively commented that in Germany draft RBMPs were published on time. However, within the procedure of official submission of the RBMPs, Germany tends to report to the European Commission in the most imprecise way possible (e.g. large scale assessments), which discourages public participation. Grüne Liga raised the question whether this is also the case in other parts of Europe. The Commission panellist replied that standard and clear structures and formats exist for reporting to the European Commission, and every single document on river basin management planning is an environmental information document under European law and international conventions. The citizens, municipalities, NGOs and scientists must have access to all background information, which could be easily arranged via the internet.
- The issue of representation was raised by the Hungarian Ministry of Environment, who asked what a good reply rate by the general population is to opinion polls. The French Deputy Water Director commented that more answers do not necessarily add more key issues to the debate, so in France the reply rates received are considered satisfactory. The EEB added that it is not important whether 1% or 2 % of population reacts directly to the questionnaires. It is not only individuals that count but also environmental organizations. Environmental NGOs use democratic processes to influence decision making but they do not require that everything they say is adopted. However, it

is good policy to take comments into account because this will improve the acceptance of decisions made. In addition, environmental NGOs often represent the public; several polls show that people trust NGOs more than public authorities, business or the European Commission because they do not defend their own private interest but the public interest.

- It would be useful to define more directly who participates in the process, i.e. it is not enough to have environmental NGOs but also city water utilities, irrigation district managers and large industry users at the table. Secondly, stakeholders need a formal role for their input to the planning process, e.g. reviewing and approving drafts. Thus, the question was raised whether there are formal criteria for participation (question by the Houston Advanced Research Centre). According to the French Deputy Water Director, France used to have local committees and meetings as well as basin committees that included farmers and others. However, now a large number of people must be involved and including the general public is a new challenge for France. Concerning the formal character of participation, the European Commission added that there are obligations but participation also entitles everyone interested to participate.
- The Dutch Society of Nature Conservation commented that there seems to be low achievement of objectives and that time exemptions should be restricted to exceptional situations. The EEB added that the objectives comprised in the RBMPs are often disappointing and authorities must support the objectives as much as possible and engage in dialogue. The European Commission also ultimately has the possibility to enforce the process, e.g. when the water pricing is not well addressed, it can take the case of bad implementation to the European Court of Justice.
- The panel representative of the Czech Ministry of Environment referred to the recent 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul where one of the outcomes was that it is necessary to involve more women and young people into the debate. The question is not only who will participate but also how to make this information clear and user-friendly for the public.



4.2 What will the River Basin Management Plans deliver?

Introduction on the importance of the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans - Mr Stavros DIMAS, European Commissioner for Environment

The Commissioner for the Environment pointed out the focus of the Water Framework Directive on river basins, rather than arbitrary administrative or political limitations, as a key innovation. This facilitates a coordinated management of water resources and is particularly important where river basins cross national borders. The river basin management plans of the Directive will set out how Member States will ensure that all waters achieve good ecological status by 2015. In addition, the plans provide an overarching framework for facilitating compliance with other water-related legislation such as the Urban Waste Water Directive, the Nitrates Directive and the Integrated Pollution and Prevention Control Directive. Without full implementation of these basic measures, the Water Framework Directive objectives will be difficult to reach.



In view of the challenges of climate change, the flexible management framework provided by the River Basin Management Plans is well suited to managing adaptation to climate change impacts that will put increasing pressure on Europe's water resources. On 2 April, the Commission published a White Paper on adapting to Climate Change in the EU which recognises the Water Framework Directive as a key legislative tool to tackle climate change impacts on the water cycle.

The Commissioner highlighted the comprehensive consultation requirements of the WFD and emphasized that the involvement of the wider public and all those concerned by water management is absolutely critical. This will ensure an open debate on how to use our scarce resources. The

Commissioner urged all EU Member States that have not started consultations on the draft River Basin Management Plans to do so as soon as possible.

"Opening of session III and implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Bulgaria", by Ms Lubka KATCHAKOVA, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria

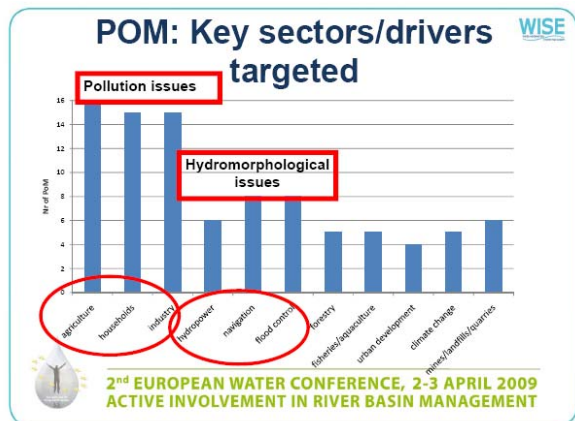


The question of “what the river basin management plans will deliver” is an important one. The river basin management plans should not be considered only as a paper outcome but be accepted as a platform for action. The significance of these plans is underestimated. Some think that the plans will remain on paper, thus this conference is great opportunity to address such scepticism. We need integrated water management and a place to solve sectoral conflicts. There is a need to invest in raising public awareness despite the economic crisis. Bulgaria also faces major challenges in the field of water management, among others the challenge of climate change and the fact that most of its river basins are transboundary.

Presentation on significant water management issues and draft River Basin Management Plans - Mr Paul Campling, VITO

The most important pressures across Europe reported in the significant water management issues (SWMI) are diffuse pollution, point pollution and hydro-morphological alterations. The most important impacts reported include nutrient enrichment, pollution from priority substances and altered habitats. Southern Europe is poorly represented in the EU SWMI analysis due to the lack of published SWMI documents for many southern RBDs. Similarly, southern Europe but also parts of northern Europe are not fully represented in the first check of available draft river basin management plans due to the delayed publication of their draft plans.

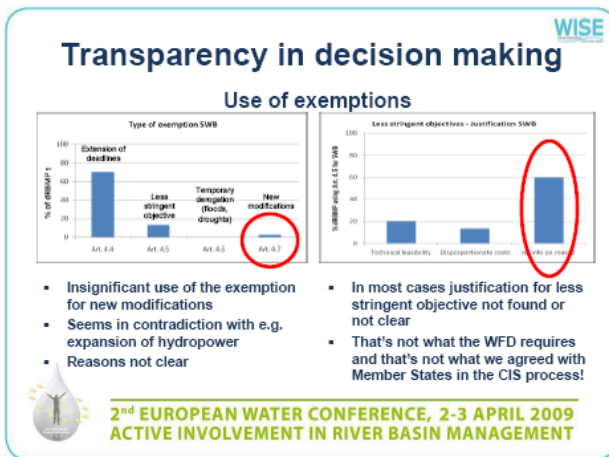
A first check of the available draft plans shows that most plans provide information on the current status of water bodies and a status forecast for 2015. However, only few plans provide forecasts of water body status after 2015. An economic analysis is included in most draft plans but several economic assessments are still ongoing. Many draft plans also do not include or do not explicitly refer to a cost-effective analysis of measures. In the draft programmes of measures, the key pressures of the significant water management issues (pollution from agriculture, households and industry) and hydro-morphological modifications (e.g. linked to hydropower, navigation and flood protection) are mainly targeted with specific measures. The level of detail and transparency of the draft plans, however, is very different from country to country.



"Commissions' expectations of River Basin Management Plans" - Mr Jorge RODRIGUEZ-ROMERO, WFD Team Leader, DG ENV.D.2

The WFD is one of the most advanced frameworks for sustainable environmental management. Within this framework, public participation is about engaging all interested parties for more transparent decision-making and there are already very good examples across Europe. There is also a need for stronger cooperation among different administrations (national, regional, local) as well as for international cooperation for sustainable water management.

So far, 16 MS have published draft river basin management plans and 3 additional MS have published part of their draft plans. 8 MS have not published any draft plans so far. A first check shows that some draft plans have important gaps. In addition, the starting point for good status (current status) as well as the level of ambition for reaching the 2015 target of good status is quite different from country to country. In this context, it is also important to clarify the basis for the ecological assessments in the draft plans. This is especially important for the ambitious MS, considering that the recently published European Commission report on monitoring reveals important gaps in the development of methods for the assessment of ecological status. Regarding the use of exemptions, information delivered in the plans does not always meet the agreements reached in the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) process. For instance, there is often missing or unclear information on justifying less stringent objectives, and there is very low use of exemptions for new modifications despite new planned projects (e.g. article 4.7 related to expansion of hydropower).



Finally, the level of detail of the programmes of measures varies considerably. It is difficult to provide information about proposed measures without data on costs, ways of financing and defined responsibilities for measure implementation.

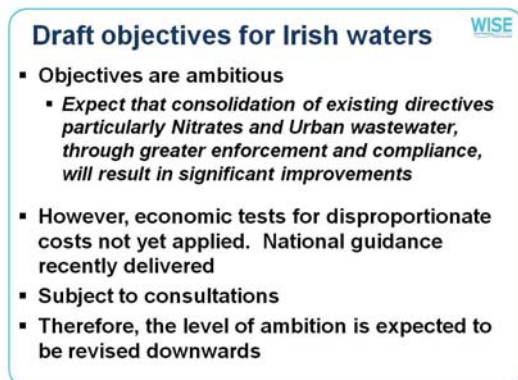
The expectations of the European Commission are transparent decision making based on sound technical data and public participation; international cooperation; programmes of measures designed to end unsustainable water practices; credible measures supported by clear financial commitments and assignment of responsibilities; and finally integration of

sectoral policies and existing directives.

"What the Irish River Basin Management Plans aim to achieve", Mr Colin BYRNE, Ireland. Water Inspectorate, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government



Currently, 46% of Irish rivers are already at good or high status, which must be maintained. The objectives for aquatic protected areas are also integrated into the classification of waters. For 54% of Irish rivers, measures need to be taken to achieve improvements. Ireland proposes to improve the percentage of water bodies with at least good status from 46% currently to 90% by 2015. This proposal is based on certain assumptions and these assumptions are subject to the ongoing public consultations. The objectives set are ambitious but it is expected that the consolidation of existing directives, particularly the Nitrates Directive and the UWWTD, through greater enforcement and compliance will result in significant improvements. Securing full implementation of existing directives will be central to WFD compliance.

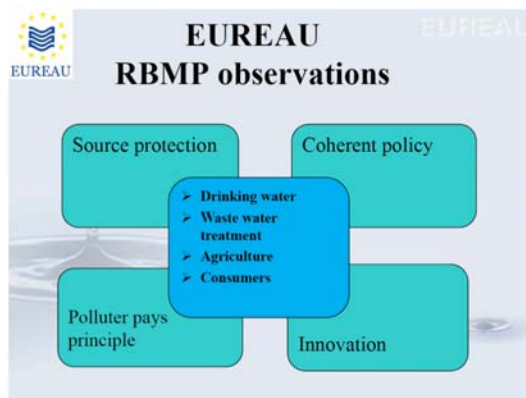


However, economic tests for disproportionate costs have not been applied yet. National guidance on this issue was recently delivered and is subject to consultations. Thus, the level of ambition is expected to be revised downwards. Costs for measures still need to be calculated and funding needs to be committed.

"Views of the water services on the River Basin Management Plans" – Ms Monique de VRIES, EUREAU



EUREAU is concerned about the lack of data on which objectives are set in the draft plans, thus there is an issue about the appropriateness of the proposed measures to reach WFD objectives. Source protection measures should be a priority since end-of-pipe measures cannot solve the problem. Diffuse pollution is still a major concern for the drinking



water sector. There is a need to phase out priority substances, which requires new investments. Priority substances should be tackled at source and not in the treatment plant. The European Commission should take a better look at the coherence of the WFD and the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD). On the issue of sewage overflows, we need to support innovative solutions and provide the financial structure for relevant investments. Diffuse pollution from agriculture remains a key issue but EUREAU is also well aware of the complexity of this problem. In this context, coherence between the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and WFD is essential.

Water services have an important role to play in public participation since they are strongly involved in WFD implementation. EUREAU members are prepared to take on more responsibility in the public participation process. EUREAU's target with the draft plans is high quality and reliable drinking water and wastewater services. Draft river basin management plans and WFD implementation need to be based on source protection, coherent policy, the polluter pays principle and innovation to benefit European citizens.

"Crunch time for Europe's water - an NGO perspective on the draft RBMP" - Mr Tony LONG, Director, World Wide Fund for Nature – European Policy Office (WWF-EPO)



WWF and EEB recently carried out a survey on the quality of WFD implementation by analyzing available draft RBMPs (29 river basins in 15 Member States). Missing RBMPs need to be delivered.

5 NGO priorities for better water management

- Transparent and publicly owned water management
- Reducing wastage and using water well
- More space for living rivers
- Clean and healthy water for people and nature
- Visionary and adaptive water policies



5 NGO priorities for better water management were put forward: transparent and publicly owned water

management; reducing wastage and using water well; more space for living rivers; clean and healthy water for people and nature; and visionary and adaptive water policies.

It was emphasized that the WFD implementation is making a difference and is strong in starting a reform process by working across borders and engaging interested parties as well as in tackling new

issues, e.g. more space for rivers. On the other hand, the WFD implementation is still weak in dealing with the uncertainties of ecological status classification, the use of economic tools, empowering people outside the water community and mobilizing political resources (e.g. to establish water saving objectives). There is a need to strengthen the use of economics and economic instruments within the WFD implementation process and decision making.

The WFD is the right tool to deal with existing and emerging water challenges. Existing laws like the WFD are essential to give substance to the debate on climate change adaptation. The best adaptation strategy is to increase the resilience of existing natural and human systems.

At the current phase of WFD implementation, the time should be used to improve transparency and address shortcomings identified.

Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel members: Lubka KATCHAKOVA, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria; Jorge RODRIGUEZ-ROMERO, European Commission, DG ENV.D.2; Colin BYRNE, Ireland, Water Inspectorate, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Monique de VRIES, EUREAU; Mr Tony LONG, WWF-EPO

Chair: Marta MOREN-ABAT, Water Director, Spain

- There is a need to identify individual best practice examples of river basin management plans but it is not clear how this can be done (intervention by the Environment Agency South England). According to the European Commission panellist, one of the main aims of this conference is to identify best examples. It is too premature to give a decisive reply on best examples based on only a 4-week survey (no in-depth analysis) but some best practice elements can be identified in the conference document. The WWF-EPO panellist added that WWF and EEB surveyed 22 draft plans against a detailed set of questions but it is difficult to “pick a winner” because different plans are strong in different aspects.
- The level of information published across Europe is very unequal. In Spain, for instance, there is only one draft plan available so far according to the University of Valencia. The European Commission panellist reassured that the issue of delivery of the plans is being followed closely.
- The issue of chemical pollution and priority hazardous substances was raised, and it was pointed out that no specific conference session was dedicated to this issue. It is important to discuss the measures to deal with this issue, since treatment facilities alone cannot deliver the expected outcome. The panel was asked how they see the relationship between upstream policies (e.g. chemicals’ policies) and downstream pollution (WFD policy) in terms of tackling water pollution from hazardous substances (question by Greenpeace Brussels). The European Commission emphasized that, although no session targets only priority substances, this is a very important issue which is being discussed in part through several sessions of the conference. WWF-EPO added that there is a need for more stakeholder involvement in the REACH debate. Water UK raised the question of how to protect the quality of drinking water in view of the issue of chemicals introduction and argued for taking advantage of WFD Article 7 to take better measures for resource protection.
- The Austrian Chamber of Commerce asked whether there is any strategy to monitor the application of exemptions to the WFD that is subject to certain principles like costs or technical feasibility in order to avoid competition distortions. On the fact that draft plans include only few indications on the use of Art. 4.7, it was argued that this can only be done for ex-post and not future projects. The European Commission panellist replied that exemptions will give a comparative assessment on how ambitious different MS are and the Commission will take a close look at how MS apply exemptions. Concerning Art. 4.7, it is not the case that it should be used ex-post. The Commission expects MS to include many more instances of this exemption on new projects since there is information that several new projects are being developed.



- The two MS on the panel (IE and BG) were asked to explain the use of exemptions in their countries, specifically whether it is the analysis of consequence that sets the use of exemptions and thereby the achievement of the WFD objectives (question by Danish agriculture representative). In Ireland, exemptions are only used in exceptional cases but it was reminded again that the objectives put up currently for consultation were not yet analysed for disproportionate costs. The panellist from Bulgaria stated that their objectives are really ambitious and they will use exemptions only in extreme conditions.
- Given the important role of water suppliers, and given the fact that NGOs identified that water saving is not yet taken up as a significant issue in the plans, EUREAU was asked how they see their role in this issue, also with regard to impact on consumers (question by think-tank Planet Earth). The EUREAU panellist replied that indeed water suppliers have to stimulate their consumers to reduce water losses and to reuse water. Related to the issue of water saving and water quantity, the New Water Culture Foundation of Spain added that the priorities of the conference would have included more quantitative issues if southern MS had more results to show at this time.
- On the issue of international river basins, MS were asked by the Portuguese NGO LPN how they work in coordination with different riparian countries. The panellist from Bulgaria, where three of four basins are transboundary, replied that there are already good examples for transboundary cooperation. This issue is very important, but it was also emphasized that for cooperation and dialogue there must be at least authorities with whom to discuss, if not equal and symmetrical structures. It is a precondition that neighbouring countries have published their draft river basin management plans in order to have a discussion.
- Concerns were expressed about the progress of work from southern EU MS. WWF Italy raised the question about the possible strategy that can be developed beyond infringement procedures to make southern countries do more on WFD implementation, especially on the political side. The Council for Nature Conservation Northern Ireland asked (via live webstreaming) "How can political commitment best be achieved?" The WWF-EPO panellist replied that at the current phase of WFD there is no access to courts to enforce implementation. However, the European elections are approaching, which provides an opportunity to ask MEP candidates, especially from southern Member States, how far they intend to go in enforcing this legislation in their countries.



4.3 Water and agriculture – a core challenge?

"Role of agriculture in the river basin management plans" - Mr Thomas DWORAK, Ecologic

Impacts from agriculture are the main reason Member States will fail to reach good ecologic status by 2015; the agriculture sector is the pressure mentioned most frequently in the SWMI assessments undertaken by MS. In the SWMIs, nutrient enrichment is mentioned as the most important environmental impact from agriculture, followed by contamination from priority substances. However, in terms of water quantity the agriculture sector is not the main cause of low river flow regimes and ground water tables in the available draft RBMPs (but it is believed this would change if all were available).

The most common agricultural measures mentioned in the dRBMPs are related to reducing impacts from fertilisation (87.6%) and from plant protection products (76.1%). Abstraction related measures and land use related measures are also widespread at 46.9% and 57.5%, respectively. Types of measures in the agriculture sector include:

WISE

Type of measures

- **Input reductions** (e.g. limits of fertilizer & PPPs in amount or area)
- **Organic farming** (combination of measures)
- **Multi-objective** (e.g. land use change, buffer zones to reduce inputs to water but also to increase biodiversity)
- **Soil erosion** (land cover requirements)
- **Water saving** (increase of irrigation efficiency)

...implemented by voluntary and mandatory approaches...

...often linked to compensation payments...

...but details on costs, area and implementation covered are often lacking

input reduction, organic farming, multi-objective, soil erosion and water saving. Measures can be implemented by voluntary or mandatory approaches and are often linked to compensation payments. The initial survey of the dRBMPs shows, however, that there is a lack of detailed information regarding costs and areas of implementation.

Within the agriculture sector itself, action is also being taken to reduce impacts on water resources. Two new requirements were introduced under the recent CAP health check, namely mandatory buffer strips along water courses and compliance with national water abstraction procedures. Additionally, a recent assessment of the Rural Development Programmes shows that they offer a broad range of funding opportunities to improve water status.

"Water Framework Directive and agricultural pressures - reducing pollution from nitrates and plant protection products" - Mr Ladislav MIKO, Director, European Commission, DG ENV.B "Protecting the Natural Environment"

Agriculture can negatively impact the environment, especially water quality. Two main policies to address agriculture impacts on water are the Nitrates Directive and the new Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides.



Mapping of the EU indicates that total mineral and manure nitrogen content in terms of kg N/ha in soils is high. The Nitrates Directive aims at reducing and preventing water pollution from agricultural sources. About 300 existing action programmes across the EU provide a set of obligatory measures (e.g. maximum N application standards) to be applied in vulnerable zones. Established codes refer to similar measures but are voluntarily applied outside vulnerable zones. However, some derogation is allowed. Non-compliance is approved and based on objective criteria, for example long growing seasons, crops with high N uptake or high net precipitation. Furthermore, exceptions are associated with a close follow up of the environmental situation through monitoring. So far, IE, UK, DK, NE, BE and DE have been allowed higher maximum amounts of manure on land than what the Directive allows. Beyond exceptions, there has been significant progress in implementing the Directive with substantial improvements in water quality; however, nutrient overload is still critical in intensive farming areas.

Overall conclusion WISE

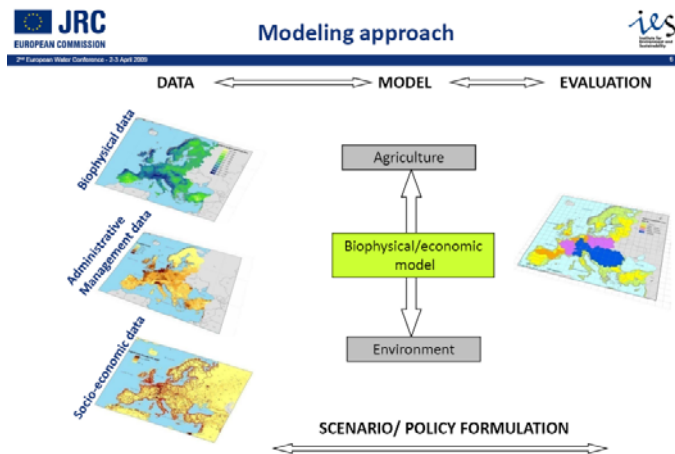
- Agriculture has an impact on the environment, in particular water quality
- EU developed legislation that sets a frame for preventing and reducing pollution from agricultural sources
- Nitrates Directive is a key stone of the WFD
 - Substantial progress in implementation past decade
 - Growing awareness in farming industry: more efficient use of inputs
 - Improved water quality noticed, however still some work to do
- The Pesticide Package (notably the new Framework Directive) will complement the WFD
 - Increased knowledge on best practices
 - Well-functioning equipment ensuring lower drift
 - Less dangerous products used at reduced quantities in sensitive areas

2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE, 2-3 APRIL 2009
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

The overall objective of the new Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides is to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment and to promote the use of integrated pest management and alternative approaches. The main instrument of the Directive is national action plans that set quantitative targets and measures to reduce risks, monitor pesticides containing active substances of particular concerns and set timetables and measures to implement the provision of the Directive. Measures will, among others, include buffer zones, safeguard zones and reduction or prohibition of pesticide use on permeable or sealed surfaces. Integrated pest management principles will become mandatory in 2014.

"Water and agriculture - a scientific perspective" - Mr Leen HORDIJK, Director, European Commission, Joint Research Centre

While it is clear that agriculture plays a key role in water management by affecting water quantity and quality, there is a need to undertake a more detailed spatial and temporal impact assessment of agriculture's impact on the EU water resources. In this context, JRC presented the DPSIR scheme – Drivers, Pressures, Status, Impact, and Response – for analysing the agriculture sector's impact on the environment. In systems analysis there is a need to develop an interdisciplinary approach (linking biophysical and economic elements) to evaluate the impact of agriculture on water resources across various spatial and temporal scales. For this evaluation, spatially explicit tools are needed that take into account the climatic, pedologic, economic and agronomic characteristics of farming to develop future sustainable agriculture scenarios.

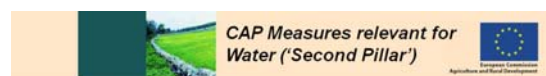


economic and agronomic characteristics of farming to develop future sustainable agriculture scenarios. To this end, the JRC follows a spatial modelling approach using biophysical, administrative management and socio-economic data in the context of agriculture and the environment and through evaluation formulates scenarios and translates them into policy. The example of irrigation illustrates how bringing together data on irrigation and coupling it with weather forecasts enables future modelling of drought events. Linking rainfall to soil parameters to look at the possibilities of droughts assists policy development by the European Commission and at national level. In addition, through spatial mapping of nutrient loads, it is possible to target important sources and take action. These examples show how spatial mapping makes it possible to adapt policies to regional conditions using scientific data. Furthermore, spatial mapping using scientific data highlights linkages between impacts, increases credibility of policy choices and reduces uncertainty of future developments.

"Water and agriculture - a DG AGRI perspective" - Mr Martin SCHEELE, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG AGRI.H.1 "Environment, GMO and Genetic resources"



The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) integrates water issues into agriculture policy in various ways. Pillar 1 of the CAP, which includes market policy and direct payments and which receives 80% of the budget, contains three measures relevant to water management: cross-compliance (CC), operational programmes for fruit and vegetables and specific support under Article 68. CC mandates compliance with the Nitrates and Groundwater Directives and establishes good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC). The Health Check revised the GAEC and further integrated water concerns through two new conditions, including "buffer strips along water courses (2012) and "compliance with authorisation procedures for irrigation" (2010). The Health Check also revised Article 68 support, which provides support for farms important for



- Investment Aid and Modernisation (Examples):
 - Increase water use efficiency (irrigation)
 - Manure storage
 - Training
- Agri-environment Measures (Examples):
 - Field margins, buffer strips, and landscape elements
 - Permanent fallow land, conversion of arable land, wetland restoration
 - Soil conservation (reduced tillage, green cover, etc.)
 - Reduced fertilizer and pesticides use
 - Organic Farming
- Compensation for area-specific disadvantages
- Water Framework Directive and/or Natura 2000

protection of environment and activities entailing environmental benefits. Water management is also included as one of the new challenges, and the rural development programmes need to be revised to take this into account.

Measures most relevant for water management are found in Pillar 2 of the CAP, the rural development programmes (RDPs). Axis 1 of RDPs includes measures to increase investment aid and modernisation, which has the potential to increase water use efficiency of irrigation schemes, increase manure storage and provide training. Agri-environmental measures, which are required by Article 39 of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR), include, among others, buffer strips, permanent fallow land, wetland restoration, soil conservation, reduced fertilisation and pesticide use and encourages organic farming. Axis 2 also provides financial compensation to farmers for income losses due to implementation of the WFD and Natura 2000 requirements.

"Perspective of the agricultural industry" - Mr Luis BULHAO, Portuguese Farmers Union, Vice-Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Environment



The agriculture sector across Europe is diverse with multiple farming systems and varying social, economic and environmental dimensions, as shown by the differing shares of

gross value added in the primary sector. It is also clear, based on results from the SWMI assessments, that the agriculture sector puts considerable pressure on the environment, such as diffuse pollution and water abstraction, which in turn creates negative impacts such as nutrient enrichment and altered habitats.

To address the implementation of the WFD and its implications on the agriculture sector, Copa-Cogeca surveyed farmers regarding quality and timing of public consultation; measures to reach environmental objectives of the WFD; rural development measures to improve water quality and quantity; and additional cross compliance requirements and the new challenges under the CAP Health Check. The survey results highlight a few common concerns. On the one hand, cross compliance requirements and public participation and consultation in the WFD are viewed positively. On the other hand, farmers, especially in water sensitive areas, would like a more detailed analysis of economic impacts regarding proposed agriculture measures. Furthermore, farmers feel that although the WFD sets a common framework across the EU, too much variation exists among the Member States with regard to timing and the degree of commitment.

River basin management plans and programs of measures. The feed-back of farmers

Answers covered a large context of situations and reflected different levels of implementation of WFD
Common concerns:

- Cross compliance is an obligation that guarantees positive and tangible efforts in agriculture regarding environmental protection setting high standards for the EU farmers business;
- Participation and public consultation of farmers' organisations were, in general, perceived as positive;
- Farmers, especially in areas with high pressure on water quality and quantity, regret the absence of a detailed impact economic analysis regarding the proposed measures in agriculture.
- WFD sets a common framework but extreme variations between MS exist concerning timing and degree of commitment.

"Environmental NGOs perspective on water and agriculture" - Mr Wim VAN GILS, Flemish Bond Beter Leefmilieu



Clean and healthy water

- We need a transition proces to get a sustainable agriculture
 - efficient with natural resources
 - minimizing its environmental impact
- This means
 - adapting to natural conditions (eg crops)
 - adapting to changing conditions
 - re-thinking practices (organic, integrated, ...)
 - closing (nutrient) cycles
 - getting over taboo's (space)

Bond Beter Leefmilieu, Koepel van Vlaamse milieuvereenigingen



A recent survey of RBMPs by an NGO shows that measures to address the agriculture sector's impact on the environment are not effective enough. Although water pricing measures are at least aimed at agriculture and financial cost recovery, they are considered not effective. Furthermore, water saving objectives were set in only 5 surveyed cases and in only 2 surveyed cases targeted individual sectors. In only 9 surveyed cases,



technological measures are promoted but are only voluntary in nature.

In Flanders, Belgium, agriculture consumes less than 10% of total water use, mostly groundwater. However, all surface waters are “at risk” due to high N and P levels. 37% of groundwater bodies (GWBs) suffer from nitrate pollution and 50% of GWBs suffer from pesticide pollution. Policies targeting water management are not seen as effective and existing measures are not enough.

To attain clean and healthy water, a transition is needed towards sustainable agriculture that is able to adapt to natural and changing conditions. The WFD should play an important role in this transition, but from the results of the NGO survey it is clear that the measures offered under the current RBMPs are not enough. The WFD needs to achieve more, and a fair contribution from the agriculture sector is needed to ensure the objectives of the WFD are met.

"Views on the water industries on water and agriculture" – Mr Daniel VILLESSOT, EUREAU



EUREAU views the recent CAP revisions critically. It feels that although GAEC was strengthened, the new standards introduced (buffer zones, irrigation authorisation) are not sufficient to really improve water quality. CAP measures are not enough to comply with the WFD, as diffuse pollution from agriculture and other sectors hinders realisation of WFD Article 7.3 “reduction of the treatment level required for drinking water production”

To improve the water situation, EUREAU believes that better linkages between CAP and WFD are necessary. Agri-environmental

measures, required under Axis 2 of the RDPs, need to be coordinated with measures included in the RBMPs. Furthermore, there needs to be a dialogue between farmers and other interested parties. Creation of common platforms at national and regional level could encourage discussion and exchange. At local level, best practice needs to be encouraged as well as innovation to develop new technologies. Monitoring is essential for long term efforts.



Better linkages between CAP & WFD

- **Need to coordinate Agri-Environment Measures (AEMs) from Rural Development (RD) programmes and measures included in RBMPs :**
 - Current consultation process on the RBMPs offers a unique opportunity to also identify the priorities for RD programmes
 - Programmes of mesures set up in the RBMPs should ensure that AEMs target the most environmental sensitive areas
 - Assessment of the cost effectiveness of measures required under the WFD

To improve the link between water management and agriculture policy, EUREAU makes the following recommendations: collaboration between EUREA and Copa-Cogeca on a cost-benefit analysis of buffer zones; encourage development of voluntary contracts between farmers and drinking water suppliers; increase cooperation between Ministries and EU institutes; application of polluter and user pays principles; promote water reuse for irrigation; and include the WFD and the new Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides in the cross-compliance regime.

Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel: Ladislav MIKO, Director of DG ENV.B "Protecting the Natural Environment"; Leen HORDIJK, Director, Joint Research Centre; Martin SCHEELE, Head of Unit, DG AGRI.H.1 "Environment, GMO and Genetic resources"; Luis BULHAO, Portuguese Farmers Union, Vice-Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Environment; Wim VAN GILS, Flemish Bond Beter Leefmilieu; Daniel VILLESSOT, EUREAU

Chair: Gabrijela GRCAR, Water Director, Slovenia

- A remark was made by the German NGO Grüne Liga that the DG AGRI presenter (Martin Scheele) indicated that there are measures to promote the conversion of arable land to grass land; however, there is evidence that these measures are being hindered by the promotion of

crops for biomass to meet national targets of renewable energy. The question was thus raised whether there are better measures available to promote the conversion of arable to grass land. The European Commission DG AGRI panellist replied that indeed there are often environmental policies that can sometimes work against each other. In relation to biomass, there is no agricultural policy that supports biomass production, although there are measures in the RDP for supporting small scale biogas facilities at the farm level. There are, however, cross-compliance measures to maintain the area of permanent grasslands in all Member States. This does not mean that there are no cases of grasslands being converted to arable land but the measures restrict this practice to the minimum. There are still measures in the RDP that support the conversion of arable to grasslands, but the uptake of this measure depends on regional decision making that has to decide which measures to promote. This means that in the German regions Grüne Liga referred to, this particular measure is not given a high priority.

- WWF Italy remarked that during this session the following terms have been used: “sustainability”, “economically viable” and “efficient use of water”. However, sustainability is closely linked to the carrying capacity of agricultural land, which is closely related to “limitations”. Although this term is not always well appreciated, it remains a fact that we live on a planet with limited resources and also natural goods and services. Therefore, the question is related to the valuation of ecosystem goods and services, for which a great deal of research has been carried out. Is the farming sector willing to take up this opportunity and challenge to provide ecosystem goods and services, rather than maximizing agricultural production, so that there is respect for natural limitations?

The European Commission DG AGRI panellist agreed that there were certainly variations in the carrying capacity of agricultural land and there is competition between sectors for land. This is a good forum to discuss what policies are and should be in place to ensure sustainable use of the land and address this competition. DG AGRI recognizes that more account should be made for the sustainable use of water in agriculture by regulating overuse. No one is challenging this. The discussion is what are the best means to achieve this, what is the most cost effective instrument and how do we strike the balance between shifting the costs for environmental mitigation on farmers and where we would consider financial support for providing ecosystem goods and services. In this respect, we have policies that support both types of measures: on the one hand, there is the system of cross compliance and on the other we have the incentive based system of agri-environmental payments.



- There was a statement via live webstreaming from the Circle of Blue (a US-based network of journalists, scientists and communication designers) asking for a reaction from the panel: “Farmers are the most important sector in the world – they feed us and also look after more than 50% of the world’s fresh water – and they also look after more than 40% of the world’s land mass. Farmers are also major managers of the environment in which we live, so farmers are not just farmers but they are people who are in control of the environment that will in turn influence human destiny”. The Copa-Cogeca panellist agreed with this statement and commented on the previous question by confirming that farmers in Europe are disposed to deliver environmental goods and services to our society. The CAP is there to support this through two policies, one for the competitive regions and the other for regions that are no longer competitive. Farmers have to be supported in non-competitive regions because they deliver values to society that are very important maintain territorial cohesion. The European Commission DG AGRI panellist answered that there was a lot of truth in the statement in the sense that food production matters and there is a lot of commitment from farmers to produce food sustainably; however, this should not distract the discussion away from the important environmental challenges facing us in preserving natural resources. The EUREAU panellist commented that he hoped that farmers would be able to find drinking water acceptable with small quantities of nitrates and pesticides.

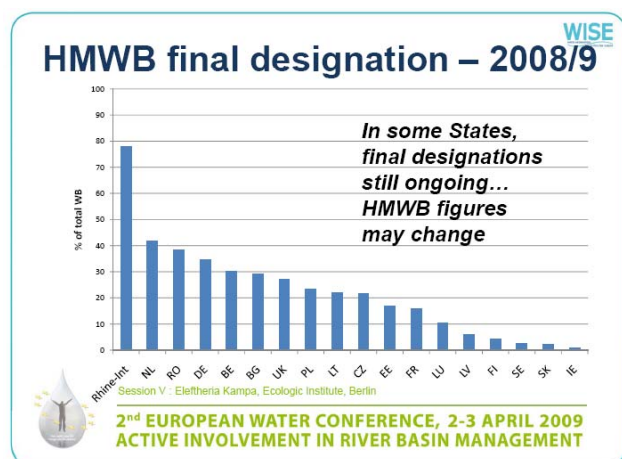
- A representative from the Foundation for New Water Culture commented that transparency and participation are essential for dealing with the issue of sustainable water use by agriculture. For example, one of the worries in Spain right now is that there are incentives in the RDP to modernize irrigation, improve water use efficiency and save water, but there is no information of where this saved water is going. This measure may not improve the environment because the water savings are being used to increase irrigation area instead of being used for environmental improvements. Another separate problem is that MS are using economic incentives in the RDP to tweak current incentives and not implement a thorough agricultural reform. The panellist of Flemish Bond for Beter Leefmilieu responded that improving water efficiency or even implementing the polluter pays principle is no guarantee for sustainable water use and needs to be combined with measures that will limit the use of water in situations where the carrying capacity of the land is insufficient.
- The European Crop Protection Association asked whether sustainable as well as cost effective measures for protecting our water should be based on toxicity of the compounds. The panellist of Flemish Bond for Beter Leefmilieu responded that there are clear rules in the WFD concerning ecotoxicology and the ecological targets that should be developed – so the guidance is there. The EUREAU panellist commented that a pesticide or crop protection package regulation has been announced for the sustainable use of pesticides as well as a new Regulation on placing Plant Protection Products on the market, which will replace the Directive 91/414/EC. The new regulation will take into account more strongly ecotoxicological studies, which is a positive way forward to protecting water resources and guiding farmers on the sustainable use of crop protection products.

4.4 Sustainable modifications to our watercourses? Focus on hydropower & navigation

"Hydro-morphology in river basin management plans" - Ms Eleftheria KAMPA, Ecologic

The WFD is the first EU water legislation that addressed hydro-morphological quality of water and made it part of the target of good ecological status. The WFD also recognizes the socioeconomic importance of water uses that depend on hydro-morphological modifications and provide the conditional options of identifying heavily modified water bodies (HMWB) (Article 4(3)).

The SWMIs showed that hydro-morphological pressures are a key issue in almost all MS, resulting mainly in significant alterations of habitats. The rates of provisional identification of HMWB, carried out in 2004, varied greatly among MS. The rates of final designation of HMWB, reported in the draft river basin management plans, vary also, but it should be noted that in many MS the final designation is still an ongoing process and figures may change. In the next planning cycle, additional water bodies may qualify for HMWB designation due to new modifications (e.g. new hydropower plants). However, a first check of the dRBMPs indicates that exemptions due to new modifications (based on Art. 4.7) have been reported in very low rates.



In terms of ecological ambition, it is often emphasized that HMWB designation does not mean doing nothing in terms of mitigation measures. From a first check of the draft plans, it is not possible to determine the level of reaching good ecological potential (GEP) for HMWB EU-wide because few RBDs report explicit separate data on this issue. Furthermore, the methods for defining GEP are still under development in some MS. The main types of measures to improve hydro-morphology in the dRBMPs are soft engineering/technical (e.g. restoration of river banks) and regulation-related (e.g. permits for structural changes). Additional measures include water level management, appropriate

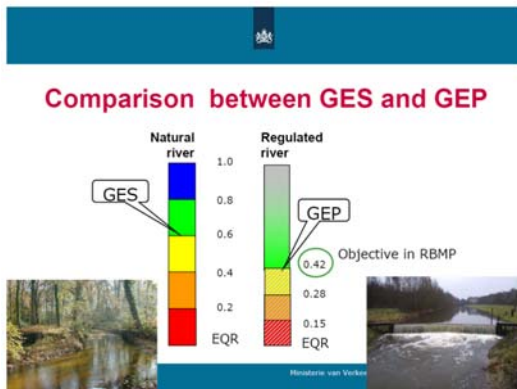
dredging techniques and further investigations on physical alterations and their impacts. The costs for hydro-morphological measures are not listed in all dRBMPs but they are expected to be considerable.

"Managing heavily modified water bodies" - Mr Bob DEKKER, Water Director, Netherlands

A large part of the Netherlands is prone to flooding. Many areas are reclaimed land from lakes where control of water is essential for reducing impacts from flooding events. Therefore, most of water bodies in the Netherlands can be considered heavily modified.



The vast majority of the water bodies in the Netherlands are either artificial (403) or heavily modified (303); only 17 water bodies are categorized as natural. However, in the Netherlands HMWB can also have high ecological value. The establishment of good ecological potential



(GEP) is coordinated between national and regional authorities with the involvement of stakeholders. Regulated rivers have lower environmental objectives compared to natural rivers: the environmental threshold of GEP is 0.42 ecological quality ratio (EQR) compared to 0.6 EQR to achieve good status in natural rivers. The establishment of the programme of measures is also coordinated between national and regional authorities with involvement of stakeholders. Measures in the dRBMPs relevant to HMWBs include: restoration of land-water gradients in lakes and canals; restoration of land-water gradients and re-meandering in rivers; creation of wetlands; projects for fish-

migration at weirs; water level management, creation of side channels. The implementation of measures has already resulted in re-meandering certain rivers in the Netherlands.

"Navigation, Hydromorphology and the Water Framework Directive" - Ms Jan BROOKE, WFD Navigation Task Group

Compared to other transportation modes (e.g. road, rail), inland water transport has much lower external costs, measured in terms of accidents, noise, air pollution and greenhouse gases. While the navigation sector is important for trade, hydro-morphology is the second biggest pressure reported in the Art. 5 reports. However, navigation (and recreation) is recognized as sustainable water use (Art. 4(3)), providing justification for the designation of HMWB. Identification of HMWB is important for setting ecological objectives. It is important that all MS identify HMWB and set the same GEP to ensure consistency across the EU; inconsistencies could affect cost implications and thus competition. Identification of HMWB and environmental objective setting has provided participation opportunities in some Member States.



Additionally, workshops have taken place to exchange experiences. The first planning round was characterized by a "mitigation"-based approach to GEP and Member States also applied for exemptions to extend the deadline to achieve the environmental goals for HMWB.

Navigation, Hydromorphology and the WFD Jan Brooke 3rd April 2009

Way forward for 2015 plans

- Understand potential implications of using different HMWB designation criteria
 - Recognise scale issues
- Harmonise methods for GEP but care in trying to compare outcomes!
- Recognise many initiatives ongoing; much useful information already exists
- Navigation stakeholders keen to remain engaged

Although the navigation sector is pleased with the way the first planning cycle is progressing, it still has some concerns about the process of designating HMWB. It is

clear that MS have defined navigation quite differently, particularly in terms of activities such as dredging. Recreation activities have also been judged differently among MS. MS criteria are very different for HMWB designation, for setting GEP and for determining what is a better environmental option and an adverse effect on use. Inconsistencies are also present with respect to scale issues. Before 2015, it is important to understand the potential implications of using different criteria, to harmonise methods for GEP, to recognize ongoing initiatives and to maintain stakeholder participation in the navigation sector.

"Small hydropower and the Water Framework Directive" - Mr Luigi PAPETTI, European Small Hydropower Association (ESHA)

Small hydropower plants, which currently (2006) make up 9% of the renewable energy mix in Europe, are regulated by both the WFD and the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (RES). As the two directives have different objectives, there is potential conflict in implementation; the WFD objectives are qualitative and the RES objectives are quantitative. The WFD requires achievement of GEP for HMWB; however, the measures foreseen to achieve GEP will have negative implications for hydropower and could affect the achievement of the RES goal to increase hydropower energy production by 7.5% by 2020. A key issue for the achievement of RES goals is whether there are better environmental options to hydropower. Other renewable energy sources do not have the same continuity, predictability, peak load production and storage capacity of hydropower. Furthermore, hydropower has the lowest cost per unit and the lowest environmental costs among renewables; it also has the highest energy payback ratio.



In a recent assessment of 20 case studies with respect to measures, including reserved flow, fish passages, dam removal and river restoration, it was concluded that the most important potential measure is environmental flow with adverse effects on energy production. It is expected that implementation of the WFD will have the following impacts on hydropower: reduction of energy production due to increased reserved flow and sediment management; increase in investment and operation costs due to new fish passages and river restoration; and restriction in the water level management of storage basins.

In light of WFD requirements, future hydropower systems may focus on multi-purpose plants (e.g. electricity production combined with drinking water supply systems), micro-hydro or small pumped storage hydro. Complete elimination of hydropower, however, is not realistic.

Perspectives?? [WISE](#)

Multipurpose plants (electricity production combined with drinking water supply systems, waste water treatment plants, irrigation channels,...)

Low-head and very low head plants. 1 - 1.5 GW more hydro?

Pico - Micro hydro

Small pumped storage hydro

Small hydro plants certification

2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE, 2-3 APRIL 2009
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

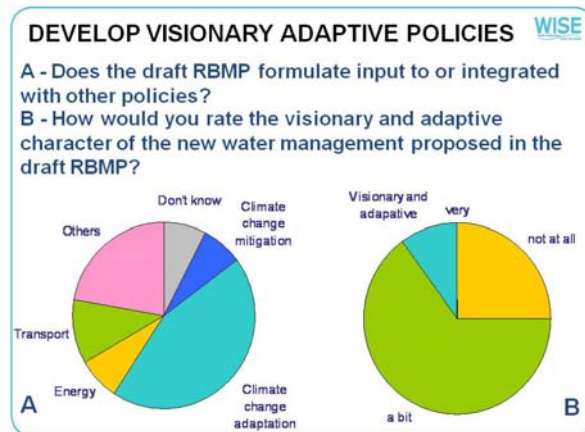
"New Hydropower projects vs. River Basin Management Plans: what comes first?" - Ms Paula CHAINHO, Liga Para a protecção da Natureza, Portuguese NGO



Preliminary findings of an NGO survey on participation in river basin planning indicate that while people were involved in the designation of HMWB, they did not feel that they successfully influenced the designation process. They also feel that the dRBMPs are not very visionary or adaptive to changing environmental problems. Further, the participants of the survey commented that there are still developments underway which would reduce the space for living rivers, that there has not been

an inventory of obsolete infrastructure and that proposed measures for hydro-morphological pressures are only minimally effective or not at all.

This situation is highlighted by the Portuguese Dam Plan (PDP) in which 10 new dams are planned. Public participation was limited, and the PDP was approved one month after only a 45-day public consultation period. Article 4.7 of the WFD sets out the conditions for allowing new modifications to water bodies. However, the PDP did not adhere to the requirements set out by Article 4.7. Firstly, new dams were not considered in the existing river basin management plans. Furthermore, although new modifications are only allowed due to overriding public interest, economic benefits and environmental impacts were not fully assessed in the PDP. The proposed dams will not produce enough energy and do not take into account changes in water availability due to climate change. In addition, WFD Article 4.7 only allows new modifications if other means cannot achieve greater beneficial objectives; however, alternative means and environmental and resource cost recovery were not assessed in the PDP. In this context, a technical independent assessment of the PDP was requested by the European Commission in November 2008.



Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel: Bob DEKKER, Water Director, Netherlands; Jan BROOKE, WFD Navigation Task Group; Luigi PAPETTI, European Small Hydropower Association (ESHA); Paula CHAINHO, Liga Para a protecção da Natureza (LPN), Portuguese NGO; Helmut Blöch, European Commission, DG ENV. D.2

Chair: Anne-Louise MÅNSSON, Water Director, Sweden

- WWF Hungary expressed concern about the approval of new navigation projects in certain parts of the Danube. Although there is an initiative by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube to set up sustainable navigation, no one knows yet how to implement this in practice. It was asked whether an analysis is planned of future navigation projects according to the WFD checking issues of costs, overriding public interest and the consideration of real alternatives. According to the European Commission panellist, concerns about new projects in the Danube River Basin do not consider that compliance with the WFD is mandatory and any activities that do not follow Article 4.7 will be directed to the Court of Justice. Furthermore, extensive consultation with all stakeholders has ensured that sustainability and WFD principles are taken into account for the Danube.
- Transparency in the designation process of HMWB was raised as a key issue that requires further attention in Germany (intervention by BUND, Friends of the Earth Germany). BUND felt that there has not been enough information provided about the designation process, including criteria used. The panellist Water Director of the Netherlands replied that at least in the Netherlands the designation process included all relevant stakeholders so there was transparency in the process.
- There was an appeal from the Danube Environmental Forum to not allow new dam projects on unmodified rivers and to monitor accession countries to avoid the construction of new dam projects before entering the EU.
- The issue of how to comply with both the WFD and the RES Directive in light of their apparent conflicts was raised by the European Anglers Alliance. The European Commission panellist clearly stated that no sector has a “free check” to not comply with the WFD. Pre-planning



processes should ensure that mitigation options are looked at in the hydropower sector to avoid impacts on water bodies. While both directives are important, the objectives of one are not more important than the other. Therefore, site specific options need to be considered to avoid injunctions from the Court of Justice. The LPN panellist added that cost-effectiveness should play a role when considering the renewable mix in the EU, which may indicate that other options (e.g. solar power) impact the environment less.

- Concern was also expressed about the use of exemptions for HMWB. The question was raised about whether the environmental goal of HMWB already takes into account the time needed to improve water body conditions so an additional exemption is superfluous (question by the Dutch Society for Nature Conservation). In response, the panellist Dutch Water Director stated that measures to reduce impacts on HMWB are very time-intensive. Furthermore, the time extension does not mean a lowering of objectives and sometimes not achieving GEP is not a question of biological elements but rather of chemical status.
- The issue of mitigation options for hydropower plants was also raised by the Dutch Ministry for Water Management. The European Small Hydropower Association (ESHA) was asked what they are doing to develop mitigation options for hydropower plants, such as research on downstream fish passes and fish-friendly turbines. The ESHA panellist replied that such mitigation options are difficult to design and that it is very hard to modify existing plants that were not set up with fish passes. While research is ongoing about fish-friendly turbines, there are no concrete options at this time.
- Via webstreaming, the Swedish federation of farmers asked how modifications to water bodies from sectors like agriculture are evaluated in the context of HMWB designation (e.g. lower lake level due to abstraction). The Danube Environmental Forum replied that this should not be considered a modification as no morphological changes result from less water in lakes.
- The Portuguese Water Authority expressed concerns that information provided in the LPN presentation on the Portuguese dam program was taken out of context and did not take into account the apparent transparency in the decision-making process and the commitments of the Authority.

4.5 Water pricing: Sending the right price signals on sustainable water use

"Foreseen use of economic instruments, cost-recovery and polluter pays principle" - Mr Pierre Strosser, ACTeon

The WFD promotes economic principles, methods and instruments. A first economic analysis of water uses was included in the Article 5 reports focusing on presenting the economic importance of main water uses and assessing cost recovery for public water services. However, in the Article 5 reports limited attention was given to the assessment of environment and resource costs, to whether the polluter-pays principle has been implemented and to whether existing pricing provides an incentive for wiser water use.

WISE

Overall...

- **The draft RBMPs stress the absence of measures that will effectively change water pricing**
 - In terms of price level, price structure, development of new economic instruments, etc.
- **No attention is given to « incentiveness »**
- **The limited attention given to water pricing is unclear and rarely explained in a sound manner.**

Session 11 - Pierre Strosser, ACTeon, France
2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE, 2-3 APRIL 2009
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

Most of the dRBMPs included an economic analysis comprising an estimation of volume, prices and costs of water services (85% of river basins) and relevant investments (2/3 of river basins). Furthermore, some dRBMPs included a detailed evaluation of the distribution of PoM costs between geographic areas and sectors and a discussion of the level of cost disproportionality to justify exemptions. Water pricing is, however, referred to in only 60% of the dRBMPs and references to water pricing are highly diverse. Overall, in the dRBMPs measures to effectively change water pricing are lacking and no attention is given to "incentiveness". Furthermore, the lack of

water pricing information is rarely explained.

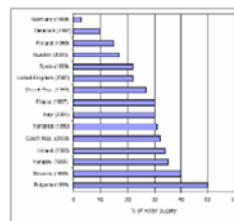
"Water resources across Europe – confronting water scarcity and drought" – Ms Maria BRÄTTEMARK, European Commission, DG ENV.D.2. on behalf of Ms Beate WERNER, Head of Group on Water, European Environment Agency (EEA)



Europe is facing water stress caused by scarcity and droughts. The Water Exploitation Index (WEI) of selected river basins already indicates extreme stress situations. Current supply-led management is unsustainable, as it has not provided any incentives to limit abstraction. As such, a sustainable demand-led approach is required using financial incentives, awareness raising and legal/regulatory instruments.

In the public sector, water pricing has reduced water use when supported by metering. Furthermore, water pricing not only reduces water use but it also provides funds to maintain infrastructure (reduce leakage). The cost of discharging wastewater has led to growth in on-site treatment and wastewater reuse, which also helps to reduce costs. In the agriculture sector, the success of water saving policies depends strongly on water pricing. However, higher costs of water could increase illegal abstraction so monitoring is necessary.

Public Water Supply



Estimated % leakage in public water supply (EEA 2003)

- Pricing must not only change water use but also provide funds to maintain infrastructure (e.g. address leakage)
- Millennium Goals – safe water supply and sanitation
- Pricing is not the only option; Raising awareness/changing behaviour and; Regulation on efficiency will have to play a role



"Economic instrument in water management - view of the German water industry " - Mr Martin WEYAND, General Director Water: Waste water, representing BDEW (German Association of Energy-and Water Industries)



Currently, Germany only uses 19% of its total available water resources. Since 1990 per capita water use has decreased by about 16%. At the same time, costs for drinking water and wastewater have remained relatively stable. Since 1998 there has been some decrease in the development of investments in public water and wastewater infrastructure.

Germany uses a number of economic instruments: water prices are in accordance with the WFD; abstraction fees have been implemented in 11 of 16 federal states (Länder); wastewater fees equal 3% of disposal costs; and voluntary payments in the agriculture sector have been implemented in some Länder. Emissions trading has not been implemented. However, there are limits to the economic instruments used. Water prices should reflect variable and fixed costs as not to reduce water flows too much. To avoid being “just another tax”, abstraction fees should be used for resource protection. The BDEW also feels that waste water fees are obsolete due to high environmental standards and that the agriculture sector should fully implement the WFD including the polluter-pays principle, which is hindered by voluntary payments.

To further improve water management, the WFD must be fully implemented in all MS and EU minimum standards should be considered (cap for water losses; ensuring continuous investments; balancing demand and supply).

Economic instruments in water management



Type	Limits
• Water prices:	Water pricing leading to inappropriate reduction of water flows can jeopardize health, hygiene, environment and sound financing Pricing should reflect variable <u>and</u> fix costs
• Abstraction fees	Fees should be used for resource protection – otherwise: just another tax
• Waste water fees	Obsolete due to high environmental standards
• Voluntary payments	Agriculture must fully apply WFD – incl. polluter-pays principle
• Emissions trading	← → conflicting with high environmental standards; local impact matters

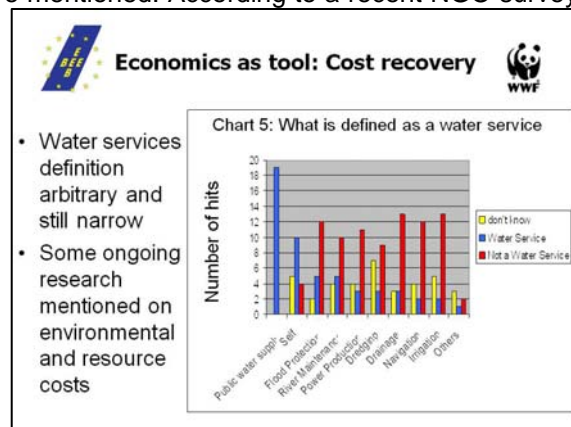
"Water pricing and water services under the Water Framework Directive" - Mr Sergey MOROZ, Freshwater Policy Officer, WWF-EPO



Economics can be a powerful tool for change but it should not be abused. Therefore, WFD economic elements need to be based on good technical analysis and be transparent. However, analysis of the use of economic elements in the implementation of the WFD shows that improvement is needed.

Currently, the economic analysis does not integrate environmental concerns and costs and fails to address key sectors that cause environmental degradation. Furthermore, the WATECO guidance document was largely not followed, leading to a wider diversity in definitions, content and focus. As a result, the Article 5 reports were often unfit to support WFD implementation. In the dRBMPs, cost effectiveness was not taken into account in the PoM and disproportionate costs are the main reason for extending deadlines and lowering objectives. Transparency of economic considerations in the dRBMPs is also low. Furthermore, it is unclear from the plans what the definition of water services is, as a wide range of activities were mentioned. According to a recent NGO survey, pricing measures in the dRBMPs tend to focus mainly on the domestic and industrial sectors and to a lesser degree on the agriculture sector. In addition, reasons for implementing pricing measures had more to do with reducing financial costs than reducing pollution and increasing efficiency.

To improve economic elements of the WFD increased transparency is needed on (i) who uses and pollutes, (ii) which services are put into place, (iii) what are their costs, and (iv) who pays these costs.



Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel: Maria Brättemark, European Commission, DG ENV.D.2; Martin WEYAND, General Director Water: Waste water, representing BDEW (German Association of Energy-and Water Industries); Sergey MOROZ, Freshwater Policy Officer, WWF-EPO

Chair: Eduard INTERWIES, InterSus – Sustainability Services

- According to a show of hands, the majority of the audience thought information and work on water pricing is not adequately transparent and complete.
- An EEB Portuguese member asked whether it is desirable to harmonize water pricing policy in Europe under the WFD. If yes, the question is whether water pricing should be adapted to local conditions, e.g. to severe stream conditions (e.g. Portugal had in 2003 an extreme drought in 100% of its territory). Secondly, the EEB Portuguese member asked whether removal of adverse subsidies on water pricing should be considered. Dams and irrigation infrastructure are paid partially or totally by public subsidies and the question is whether this should influence the water price.



On the issue of harmonizing water pricing mechanisms, the European Commission panellist replied that the general principle of the WFD is to respect the great diversity of climatic and local conditions and this also applies to water pricing mechanisms.

- The German NGO Grüne Liga addressed the BDEW (German Association of Energy and Water Industries) arguing that water consumption is reducing, climate change is taking place and also the population is decreasing. Thus, the solution appears not to use more water but to

adapt the water infrastructure in the future. For example, in Berlin water companies could save money if one water work closed down. Water abstraction and wastewater fees are still the best instruments and could be extended to mining activities for example.

The BDEW panellist replied that there is a misunderstanding concerning infrastructure. Economic costs can rise again if hygienic problems exist and additional flushing etc. is necessary. There is a crucial point beyond which money cannot be saved anymore. Not only water pricing but also other instruments should be considered.

The German NGO NABU commented that when talking about hygienic problems there is an issue of mismanagement of wastewater pipes and not a problem of reduced water use.

- Via webstreaming, the Northern Ireland WFD stakeholders asked whether the European Commission thinks that wastewater charges are needed to comply with the WFD. The Commission panellist replied that it is necessary to have water pricing in households but Article 9.4 also gives the possibility of exemptions. In any case, the Commission will look carefully at the justifications provided for derogations in the river basin management plans.
- On the issue of water pricing methods, the WWF-EPO panellist argued that some more work needs to be done. First, an analysis has to be done why water pricing has been applied so poorly. In some draft river basin management plans, it is mentioned that there is a study ongoing on this issue so there is no certainty yet how it will be handled. This has to be controlled afterwards.
- The WWF-EPO panellist also commented the issue of public subsidies. The EU budget review next year needs to shape agricultural policy but should public money be used to destroy public goods? Concerning the impact of water pricing on farmers, there is a lot of potential and the impact can be manageable because other options are open for farmers (e.g. changing crops).

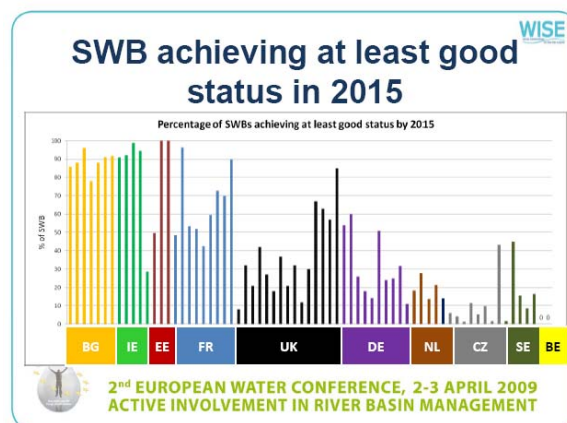


The European Commission panellist added that WFD Article 9 does not prevent remedial measures in terms of subsidies but it is very important how Article 9 is implemented and that there is transparency also as regards subsidies in the river basin management plans. Currently, the next work programme 2010-2012 of the Common Implementation Strategy is being discussed and the issue of economics is certainly one topic considered for further work.

4.6 The challenge of 2015 – environmental objectives and exemptions

“Environmental objectives and the use of exemptions - Mr Thomas DWORAK, Ecologic

Results of the survey of draft RBMPs shows that many surface water bodies will not achieve good status by 2015. Reaching good status for surface water bodies (SWB) varies greatly from below 10% (BE-Flanders, CZ) to above 80% (in several RBDs in IE, BG, FR and EE). Furthermore, the level of improvements in SWB status is very different among Member States. While Ireland and Bulgaria expect considerable improvement, Czech Republic foresees only minor improvements. Good status in most SWB is expected by 2027 at the latest. More groundwater bodies, on the other hand, are reported to achieve the objective of good status by 2015. However, groundwater quantity issues are more



likely to be solved than qualitative issues.

It is clear from the survey that many Member States use exemptions. For SWB, 80% of the dRBMPs screened have applied exemptions and only 8% of dRBMPs do not apply for SWB exemptions; 12% of dRBMPs provide no relevant information or exemptions still need to be established. For GWBs, 61% of the screened dRBMPs exemptions are applied and only 18% of dRBMPs do not apply GWB exemptions; 21% of dRBMPs provide no relevant information or cases of exemptions are still to be established. The exemption of "extension of deadline" is most frequently used, while "less stringent objectives" are less frequent. Exemptions under Article 4.6 "temporary deterioration" and Article 4.7 "new modifications" are only found in very few cases.

"Objectives and exemptions in the German River Basin Management Plans" - Mr Fritz HOLZWARTH, Water Director, Germany



Although Germany has made serious efforts to make objectives and exemptions as harmonized as possible among its federal states, they are not completely harmonized yet. However, there is still a certain degree of comparability among the river basins. The Ministry of Environment is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the river basin planning process and intends to use the public participation time to make adjustments to the plans. It is clear from the Article 5 reports that many surface and ground water bodies will not achieve good status by 2015. As such, Germany is using

exemptions to extend the deadline of meeting the objectives. It is important to keep in mind that extending the deadline does not translate into watering down the objectives.

Although exemptions have been applied, discussions with different sectors are still taking place to ensure the requirements of WFD are progressively achieved. For example, in the navigation sector, the development of ecological maintenance of river ways has been proposed and will be implemented. Mitigating and reversing morphological changes of rivers in Germany is a priority to ensure biodiversity and fish migration. Therefore, existing hydro-morphological alterations should be addressed before discussing new modifications.

Beyond morphology, the chemical status of water bodies, especially groundwater, is still a clear problem that requires closer cooperation with the agriculture sector. Exemptions for groundwater bodies are necessary since it will take a long time to achieve good chemical status. Pollution from public sewage has been largely resolved but problems remain with nutrients, pesticides and micro-nutrients, which will require technical options.

"Objectives and exemptions in the UK River Basin Management Plans" - Mr Chris RYDER, deputy Water Director, United Kingdom

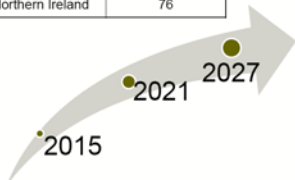
At the moment, most water bodies in the UK are not at good ecological status. Scotland has by far the most water bodies already in good status (60%); the rest of the UK remains under 35%. To achieve the objectives of the WFD, the UK is engaging relevant actors at all levels and at all stages of implementation, from national forums to regional liaison panels to area and catchment based groups



Where will we get to?

•Good Ecological Status

	2015 (%)
England	26
Wales	35
Scotland	67
Northern Ireland	76



and sector groups. Implementation of the WFD is done through a phased approach taking into account cost effectiveness and proportionate costs.

The use of exemptions in the first planning cycle is limited; "less stringent objectives" are applied only to a small number of water bodies. However, by 2015, little progress will be made in the UK. Compared to

the current situation, in England water bodies at good status will increase by only 5%; in Scotland by only 7%; and in Wales by only 2%. North Ireland will make the greatest improvement with 76% of water bodies achieving good status compared to only 34% at the moment.

As a result, the UK intends to take further action through the following activities: engagement and local buy-in/actions; ban on P in detergents; introduction of water protection zones; implementation of catchment management plan; introduction of a catchment restoration fund; new hydro-morphology powers; general binding rules; monitoring and further investigations.

"Agriculture sector's perspective on environmental objectives" - Mr Eric JORGENSEN, Danish Agriculture, Member of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Environment

Agriculture is an important player when it comes to quality and quantity of water. While it is clear that agriculture impacts on the environment need to be reduced, it is also clear that agriculture production cannot occur without some impacts. Copa-Cogeca feels that some miscalculations occurred during the WFD objective setting and that the actual situation should have been taken more into account. The deadline is too short to achieve the objectives and there is a risk that the right solutions will not be found due to a lack of time. Copa-Cogeca also feels that the participation process did not have enough time.



Because of the environmental objective setting process and the tight deadline, exemptions are wide-spread in the EU. Exemptions should be based on sound economic analysis and analysis of disproportionate costs. There is a battle between pragmatism and idealism with respect to achieving objectiveness and applying exemptions. Exemptions, however, are affecting the equal implementation of the WFD across the EU. Copa-Cogeca is concerned about the unequal level of implementation and wants to ensure that competition is not distorted. As a result, the EU needs to monitor implementation to secure equal efforts. Additionally, funding options for implementation have to be evaluated.

Turning desk work into real improvements

- Active and continuous involvement of key players
- Pragmatic approach from both stakeholders and authorities
- Widespread use of exemptions
- Equal level of implementation in all MS
- CAP and EU environmental policy must be synchronized

copa cogeca

To avoid distortions and to reduce agriculture impacts on the environment, it is necessary to take a realistic approach and to take action. Public participation and networking is important, but real action needs to happen now. There also needs to be a balance between conservation and agriculture through improved integration of sectoral policies.

"The Environmental NGO perspective" - Mr Ralph UNDERHILL, RSPB



In the UK environmental NGOs can contribute positively to river basin planning: local groups have in-depth knowledge about local conditions and much of the work that NGOs do involves protection and enhancing water bodies. NGOs want to contribute positively to river basin planning; however, in order to be involved in the debate, a certain level of detail is required in the draft plans.

Adding More Depth.....

What measure is disproportionately costly?	What pressures are causing failure to achieve GES?
What action will be taken on a waterbody?	Why is a measure technically infeasible?

Water Framework Directive RSPB WWF

Currently, the dRBMPs for England and Wales do not provide information on the pressures causing water bodies to fail meeting good status, nor is it clear what measures are going to be applied at a water body level. There are also no adequate justifications for the use of the disproportionate cost or technical feasibility derogations.

For stakeholders to get more involved, more information is needed about the following issues: what measures are disproportionately costly; what pressures are causing the failure to achieve good ecological status; what actions will be taken at water body level; and why are measures deemed technically infeasible. In general stakeholders need more access to information regarding the use of exemptions to be better involved in the decision-making process.

Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel: Fritz HOLZWARTH, Water Director, Germany; Chris RYDER, deputy Water Director, UK; Eric JORGENSEN, Danish Agriculture, Member of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Environment; Ralph UNDERHILL, RSPB; Jorge RODRIGUEZ-ROMERO, European Commission, DG ENV.D.2.

Chair: Joachim D'EUGENIO, Secretariat General; European Commission

- The panel was asked whether current results on objectives and exemptions are encouraging or rather give a bleak picture.

The European Commission panellist commented that there is a lot of action going on and there are good examples in the draft plans but the Commission also has some uncertainty about the level of ambition of Member States. It is early to make a final statement on the reasons for the different levels of ambition; political will is certainly one aspect but also other elements are important since not all MS have the same level of development of assessment methods of ecological status. As far as exemptions are concerned, they are the core element in the plans for balancing levels of environmental protection and socio-economic development.

The Danish agriculture panellist argued that the process is on track and in the right direction. To speed up the process, we need to look more locally at individual water bodies. There is a lot of knowledge both with green NGOs and also the farming society, thus solutions have to be found on local level.

According to the RSPB panellist, accessibility, transparency and public involvement are important for raising the ambition in many MS.

The German Water Director felt encouraged to continue this process, arguing that we never had before so much accessible data on water in the various countries in such transparent way. He also proposed more cooperation with the agricultural community to find out more about the impacts of agriculture on water and to find the right solutions.

The UK Deputy Water Director commented that it is positive that the draft plans are published and many people are engaged at looking at them and willing to commit to action. There is in fact more ambition there than seen in the plans because many things improve without immediately leading to good status of water bodies.

- The European Commission was asked how it is going to evaluate exemptions (question via live webstreaming by a German spectator). The Commission panellist replied that the WFD requires that justifications for the exemptions are provided in the river basin management plans. A guidance document has been recently published on this topic (available on WFD CIRCA), which includes a section on public participation and transparency, highlighting the process in which exemption justifications must be made. The European Commission expects the guidance, agreed by all MS, to be followed.

- EUREAU commented that there will be a need to persuade



citizens and politicians of the importance of water, in particular in view of the new elections for the European Parliament. A dialogue between water companies and the agriculture sector is necessary to ensure we reach the goals fixed by the WFD.

- WWF Italy expressed concerns that the general picture presented in this conference about the importance of exemptions used by MS is very partial. Indeed, as southern Europe is not well represented in the review studies, the results represent only part of the reality. Thus, WWF Italy asked whether there are plans to compare countries and assess whether there is a link between the level of exemptions asked for and the number of new infrastructure built without applying article 4.7. The European Commission panellist replied that the Commission is concerned about the low level of using article 4.7 in the draft river basin management plans. The Commission will ask the MS for feedback on the reasons for that.
- Many countries propose extensions of deadline up to 2021 and 2027. The European Commission was asked how it will react if a country which uses extensions of deadlines now decides in 2016 or 2022 to apply exemptions of less stringent objectives (question by the Swedish federation of farmers). The Commission panellist replied that it is difficult to say what will happen in 10 years. The most important issue now is to ensure that the river basin management plans propose clear measures to tackle long-lasting problems, for example eutrophication in the Baltic.
- The Danube Environmental Forum commented that most draft plans include only catalogues and no specification of where the measures will take place. A more water-body-specific approach is needed to make citizens understand what is going on and how it might affect them. It was asked how the process can be influenced to ensure information is presented locally/at water body scale. The RSPB panellist replied that governments can be persuaded to give more information on water body scale if they realise that this will help the public to understand the problems better and it is possible that stakeholders bring forward measures.
- In addition, the Danube Environmental Forum asked what action is planned for the sturgeon in the Danube and how support can be gained for carrying out a sturgeon feasibility study. The German Water Director replied that undertaking a feasibility study is important. However, we need to be realistic on what we are able to achieve and to ensure that we work together with other downstream countries, for example Romania.
- PIANC raised the issue that we talk a lot about what we are not going to do but we should also talk about what we are going to do. The “one-out-all-out” approach causes a problem in terms of communication. PIANC asked whether there are any thoughts on how to better communicate elements from the draft plans in terms of improvements (even they do not lead now to an increase in ecological status class) to ensure that those making efforts see that their contribution is making a difference. The UK Deputy Water Director agreed that this is an important point and that we need to do more work on benefits of action taken to support communication. The RSPB panellist added that in the draft plans of England & Wales one of the problems is that it is not always clear how measures target specific pressures and which specific benefits they will achieve.

4.7 “Emerging” issues in European water management

"Climate Change adaptation - a challenged water future" - Mr Peter GAMMELTOFT, Head of task force on Climate Change adaptation



Climate Change (CC) is expected to affect regions of the EU differently, with the southern MS predicted to be affected more than the northern MS. Although changes due to climate change (e.g. changes in extreme events of floods and droughts, precipitation patterns, sea levels etc) may be especially relevant to certain regions, their effects will have implications across the EU. There are, however, solutions and adaptation measures to reduce the effects of climate change ranging from traditional methods (e.g. increase storage through dams) or green infrastructure (e.g. salt marshes). Ecosystem-based adaptation is often the best and most cost-effective approach.

At EU level, policy making is addressing CC and adaptation measures, for example through the drafting of the White Paper on Adapting to Climate Change (1 April 2009), which incorporated stakeholder and internal consultations. The objective of the EU adaptation framework is to improve the EU's resilience to cope with CC impacts using a phased approach. Phase 1 (2009-2012) lays the ground work through strengthening the knowledge base; mainstreaming CC adaptation into key policy areas; employing a combination of policy instruments for funding; and promoting international cooperation. Phase 2 (2013 onwards-) involves implementing the adaptation strategy. This approach will require close co-ordination with the MS. To this end, an Impact and Adaptation Steering Group (IASG) will be created, which will facilitate the Adaptation Framework. The Group will also be supported by technical groups and will consult with civil society and the scientific community.

WISE

EU adaptation framework

Objective:
To improve the EU's resilience to cope with the impacts of climate change

Phased approach:

- **Phase 1: 2009-2012 – Lay ground work**
- **Phase 2: 2013 onwards - Implementation of a comprehensive adaptation strategy**

Session VIII Peter Gammeterhoff, Head of Unit ENV.D.2, European Commission
2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE, 2-3 APRIL 2009
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

"From land to sea – Future challenges of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive" - Mr Geert VERREET, Marine Strategy Team, DG ENV.D.2.

Much less is known about the marine environment compared to inland water resources. Technological evolution and breakthroughs allow more/new activities to take place in the marine environment, such as energy and food production.

Furthermore while some traditional uses are “past their peak” (e.g. waste disposal), other problems are still not reduced (e.g. depletion of fish stocks). Since use of the marine environment is changing, there is a need to revisit its ecosystem functions.



Two major EU framework directives govern marine and coastal waters: the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The MSFD, approved in 2008, establishes a framework wherein MS shall take the necessary measures to achieve or maintain good environmental status in the marine environment by 2020 at the latest. The Directive uses an ecosystem-based or regional approach to manage human activities and integrate coastal concerns in

Marine Strategies - implementation milestones

Marine Strategies will culminate with:

- Programme of measures towards good environmental status – **by 2015**
- **Achieve Good Environmental Status – by 2020**

Some key concepts:

- Regional approach, specific to each sea basin
- Building upon existing activities developed in the framework of regional seas conventions
- Adaptive management, with regular review (every 6 years)

other policy fields, e.g. agriculture. It will ensure that such activities do not prevent achievement of good environmental status, that they maintain the capacity of the marine environment to respond to human-induced changes and enable sustainable use of marine goods and services. To implement this Directive, MS must progressively develop Marine Strategies, including a description and assessment of the current environmental status, establishment of environmental targets and associated indicators, set up of monitoring programmes and programmes of measures. Good environmental status should be achieved by 2020.

"Impacts of climate change on the water cycle: trends and challenges" - Mr Richard HARDING, WATCH



There are already observed changes happening in the water cycle due to climate change (CC). Heavy precipitation will increase in some areas and decrease in others. However, there is no model consensus of the magnitude of these regional changes, so the results of current assessments must be looked at cautiously.

To assess the impacts of CC, the WATCH Integrated Project has been established. It analyses the current global water cycle and evaluates how the global water cycle and its extremes respond to future drivers of global change. It also evaluates the effects of feedbacks on the water cycle as well as uncertainties in predictions. The aim of the project is to develop a modelling

and data framework to assess the future vulnerability of water. However, it is still hard to translate large scale predictions to local scale. Most assessments use precipitation trends to consider potential changes such as increased flooding events. Local level characteristics at river level, however, are not taken into account, which reduces the ability to really determine how climate change will affect the water cycle. Therefore, the goal of WATCH is to deliver improved global hydrology models and downscaling methodologies to reduce uncertainty from modelling.

 Climate change is happening but is considerable uncertainty

There is good agreement that:

- Nearly everywhere temperatures will increase
- Globally rainfall will increase
- Extremes will increase
- Generally dry areas get drier and wet wetter
- Sea level will rise



There is not good agreement:

- Rainfall trends in many regions of the world
- The magnitude of the changes are uncertain
- Different hydrological models give different responses to rainfall drivers
- How should policy makers use uncertainty?

"Water for the recovery of climate - A new water paradigm" - Mr Jan POKORNY, Czech Republic



Circulation of water in nature is realized in large and small cycles between and within oceans and continents. Through landscape management (deforestation, agriculture) and other activities (urbanization, river management etc.), humankind accelerates rainwater runoff and causes land draining.

Solar energy incident on land surface is partly reflected and then distributed into evapotranspiration, sensible heat, ground heat flux or photosynthesis. All these energy fluxes can be monitored and quantitatively evaluated. The fate of incoming solar energy depends largely on the presence or absence of water in an ecosystem. Presence of water is a fundamental precondition that determines the distribution of energy between the two main energy fluxes: sensible and latent heats. If water is not present, most of the solar energy is changed into sensible heat, which results in large momentary temperature increases of the environment. However, vegetation with good water supply uses most of the solar energy for evapotranspiration, which is a perfect air-conditioning process: evaporation cools overheated places and latent heat of water vapour is released on cool places in condensation processes. Ecosystems with high supply of water and energy are the most productive. In this context, it is important to find methods to retain sufficient water in the landscape and support vegetation in areas as large as possible.



Stop desertification and bring back water and vegetation:

- Air-conditioning via short water cycle
- More biomass, more food
- Biodiversity increase
- Carbon sequestration
- Recycling of nutrients and water
- Employment
- Any negative effect??

 **2nd EUROPEAN WATER CONFERENCE, 2-3 APRIL 2009**
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

Statement by Mr Jean-Philippe TORTEROT, Vice president of the European Water Association, (EWA) and incoming president

To better understand the implications of climate change on water resources, it is first important to identify, characterise and forecast the potential impacts of climate change. Climate change induces or modifies trends and hazards and increases variability and uncertainty. However, climate change is not the only non-stationary factor; system changes such as land use also affect water resources. To better prepare for the future, “no return points” need to be identified.



Decision-making needs to take into account long term infrastructure assets to address the issue of how to cope with increased uncertainty when deciding about investments. Furthermore, decisions should be made on how to assess the adaptation capacity of assets and how to design climate-proof assets. Finally, it is important to consider what additional knowledge to expect over time and how and when to question initial investments.

HOW CAN WE PROCEED ?

risk of mismatch of timing between adaptation research and adaptation implementation

need to support decision in a transparent way, without using any “black box”

➤ need to develop partnership research, decision support oriented, targeted and field specific, with a high level of collaboration between decision makers, stakeholders, scientists

➤ need to encourage networking between site specific “experiments”, in order to foster a collective learning process

To reduce the risk of mismatching timing between adaptation research and adaptation implementation, the EU needs to support decisions in a transparent way. Partnerships for research need to be developed which are decision-support oriented, targeted and field specific. Networking needs to be encouraged between site specific “experiments” to foster collective learning.

“Water Security” - Ms Irene LUCIUS, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme

Water security is an important issue in light of changing global conditions. To better understand impacts on water resources and to raise awareness and promote sustainable stewardship, water footprints are an important methodological tool that can be used at all levels. A water footprint measures the total virtual water content of products consumed by an individual, business, town, city or country. Virtual water refers to the volume of water required to produce a product regardless of its origin. Therefore, water footprints indicate the use of all local and global water resources.



A recent water footprint study shows that the UK is only 38% self-sufficient in water sources and most of the water consumed is through virtual water trade. The UK is the 6th largest net importer of virtual water, with the highest contributions coming from West Africa and Latin America. The water footprint methodology approach can also be applied to individual products. The importation of tomatoes from Spain to the UK further highlights this issue: Spanish tomato production is characterised by high evaporation and water pollution rates and these rates are included in the virtual water consumption of the UK.



Why water footprints?

- Awareness raising
- Links to impacts
- Driving stewardship ethic



The importation of tomatoes from Spain to the UK further highlights this issue: Spanish tomato production is characterised by high evaporation and water pollution rates and these rates are included in the virtual water consumption of the UK.

The results of water footprint studies can be used by the Government to develop bilateral strategies with countries that produce products; by citizens to help guide decisions in which products to buy; and by businesses to increase efficiency and reduce risks. For example, the

WWF is working together with Coca-Cola to improve efficiency of the company's water use and to support more efficient water use in its agricultural supply chain.

Discussions following the presentations emphasized the following elements:

Panel: Peter GAMMELTOFT, Head of task force on Climate Change adaptation; Geert VERREET, Marine Strategy Team, DG ENV.D.2.; Richard HARDING, WATCH; Jan POKORNY, Czech Republic; Jean-Philippe TORTEROTOT, Vice president of EWA and incoming president; Irene LUCIUS, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme

Chair: Fritz HOLZWARTH, Water Director, Germany

- The European Commission was asked whether, in light of its White Paper on Climate Change, it will encourage MS to support green infrastructure rather than traditional methods to achieve objectives of existing Directives, e.g. the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) (question by the Consumer Council for Water England and Wales).

The Commission panellist replied that the White Paper encourages the use of green infrastructure. Infrastructure, such as the Thames barriers or delta infrastructures of the NL at the mouth of the Rhine and Meuse, can be paid for if you have high values behind it. If you don't have enough high values, green infrastructure is an alternative. The costs of building infrastructure rises exponentially with the size of infrastructure and the size of climate change impacts. So, there is a good case for use of green infrastructure. Concerning the UWWTD, the Commission panellist replied that in the EU-15 important deadlines of this Directive date back to 1998 and 2005. For infrastructure that has not been built so far, MS will not be put off the hook. The earlier obligations are still there. It may be sensible to change track, e.g. MS have to check whether the solutions of 15 years ago are still good solutions but there is no change to the initial timetable.



- Concerning the link between freshwater and marine water in view of climate change, it is still the case that surface water carries an enormous amount of hazardous substances and possibly excess nutrients to the sea. The European Commission was asked what its plan is when they consider climate change, whether they are going to integrate it in this context and whether they are going to use the most pragmatic approaches (question by Rijkswaterstaat Noordzee).

The Commission panellist replied that climate change will lead to an increase in water demand (due to a combination of temperature rise and economic development) and thus to a reduction of water availability. As a result of reduced water availability, extra efforts are needed for keeping the water clean and being even more vigilant to maintain good water quality to avoid very high costs for treating water.

- WWF-EPO raised the issue of building grey infrastructure that can actually limit our adaptation capacity. For instance, precipitation is going to change and infrastructure which is based on old hydrological models will limit our adaptation capacity. In the context of the phased approach put forward in the European Commission White Paper, WWF-EPO asked if this approach means that no action should be taken during the 1st phase before 2012. The Commission replied that action is expected already in the 1st phase. One should take no-regret actions already. On the issue of infrastructure, the EWA panellist replied that the answer is to be innovative and to combine different approaches, not to build pure grey or pure green infrastructure.
- On the issue of uncertainty, the University of Osnabrück commented that a lot of research has been done already on how to cope with uncertainty. The EU-funded project NeWater developed uncertainty guidance. Adaptive water management deals with uncertainty not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of what it means to different stakeholders.
- The moderator (German Water Director) concluded that this session underlined that the water community should not stay comfortably in the water "box" but look beyond it.

5. CONCLUSIONS: WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE LEGACY OF TODAY'S WATER MANAGEMENT?



Mr. Karl Falkenberg, Director General of DG Environment, addressed the conference with a concluding speech. He noted that water attracts a lot of attention at present with many related events taking place on the international level.

Our understanding of water and also regulation in this area is growing. The main issue is what kind of regulation to use, how much regulation and in which direction it should go.

The Director General supported thinking beyond the water “box” to provide the proper answers to water issues. For example, despite multiple directives on water, if there are no answers on the soil issues, society will suffer from the impacts of climate change since proper soil management is expected to play a key role in this respect.

Water management is indeed affected by many other policies and needs to be coordinated with them. The WFD and its focus on river basin management plans is obviously one answer to these concerns. It is important to look at the impact of a number of other economic activities on water, e.g. agriculture, and coordinate with a number of other sectors as well such as industrial sectors, tourism etc.


Policy implementation in the field of water management will only be successful if all different levels of administration across Europe work hand in hand and understand what subsidiarity means. Subsidiarity should not mean that everything is left over to individual municipalities or even Member States. We should first understand well what we would like to do jointly and then we should decide how to achieve it (in a clearly established direction that should be applicable to all).

The main conference conclusions on the downside are:

- There is a north-south divide in Europe when it comes to the individual national river basin management plans. In northern Europe most plans have been published, while southern Europe is lagging behind. This is an issue of concern, since southern Europe is an area with more visible and multiple water problems and one would expect efforts there to be more intensive to address them.
- Within the different draft river basin management plans, the level of ambition differs a lot, from some Member States that developed relatively comprehensive strategies and already started pricing them and beginning to identify the means to implement them, to other Member States whose plans remain a lot more general and often attached with a lot of exemptions. We need to focus on a more coherent level of ambition throughout the EU.
- We need to continue to push for transparency in these draft river basin management plans so that public participation can be better organized. There needs to be basic access to information. The draft plans should be equally accessible and discussed in the different MS so that everyone can form an opinion and contribute to their development.
- Where there are exemptions, these need to be clearly identified and justified.

Finally, some key positive reflections are:

- The conference has been positive and has shown that public participation can work and make a difference. The consultations that were held during the conference on the draft river basin



management plans show that new solutions have been found and can further be found in the national discussions. Thus, it is valuable to hold public discussions to find the balance of interests between different sectors, municipalities, NGOs etc.

- It is helpful that the majority of Member States have draft plans available. It should be recognized that there is, in at least a number of plans, a fairly good level of ambition and commitment.
- The conference showed that it is possible to have ambition in designing complete river basin management plans according to the Directive. One of the purposes of the conference was to make sure that some minimum requirements were already on the table, based on earlier existing directives like the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, and that we can now achieve additional progress with the WFD.

ANNEX I: EXHIBITION





ANNEX II: PROGRAMME WITH LINKS TO VIDEOS AND PRESENTATIONS

Day 1: Thursday 2 April 2009

Registration from 8h30 - Coffee

I: Opening session 10h00-11h00

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

Moderator : Mr Peter Gammeltoft, Head of Unit DG ENV.D.2 "Protection of Water and the Marine Environment"

- **Welcome and opening of the conference – "Promoting active and transparent involvement at the EU level"** - Mr Jos DELBEKE, Deputy Director General, DG Environment, European Commission
- **Keynote speech** - Mr Richard SEEBER, MEP, European Parliament
- **Keynote speech** - Mr Karel BLÁHA, Deputy Minister for the Environment, Czech Republic

II: Public participation in the planning process – state of play 11h00-12h30

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

Moderator : Mr Philip Weller, Executive Secretary, International Commission for the Protection of Danube River (ICPDR)

- **Introduction on the implementation of the WFD and importance of public participation – result of the survey on consultation** - by Mr Benoît Grandmougin, ActEon
- **Introductory presentations and panel debate on good and bad practices in consultation:**
 - "Public Consultation in France - state of the art and good practices 2009" - Mr Jean-Claude VIAL, Deputy Water Director, France
 - "European environmental NGOs - lessons learnt from consultations" - Mr John HONTELEZ, Secretary General, European Environment Bureau
 - "Water managers' perspective" - Mr Sybe SCHAAP, EUWMA
 - Discussion

Lunch – Visit to the exhibition area

III: What will the River Basin Management plans deliver? 14h00-16h00

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

Moderator : Ms Marta Moren-Abat, Water Director, Spain

- **Introduction on the importance of the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans** - Mr Stavros DIMAS, European Commissioner for Environment
- "Implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Bulgaria" - Ms Lubka KATCHAKOVA, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria
- **Presentation on significant water management issues and draft River Basin Management Plans** - by Mr Paul Campling, VITO
- "Commissions' expectations of River Basin Management Plans" - Mr Jorge RODRIGUEZ-ROMERO, WFD Team Leader, DG ENV.D.2
- **Introductory presentations and panel debate on what to expect in the river basin management plans :**
 - "What the Irish River Basin Management Plans aim to achieve" - Mr Colin BYRNE, Ireland, Water Inspectorate, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
 - "Views of the water services on the River Basin Management Plans" - Ms Monique de VRIES, EUREAU
 - "Crunch time for Europe's water - an NGO perspective on the draft RBMP" - Mr Tony LONG, Director, WWF-EPO
 - Discussion

Coffee

IV: Water and agriculture – a core challenge? 16h15-18h00

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

Moderator : Ms Gabrijela Grčar, Water Director, Slovenia

- **Presentation on the role of agriculture in the river basin management plans** - by Mr Thomas Dworak, Ecologic
- "Water Framework Directive and agricultural pressures - reducing pollution from nitrates and plant protection products" - Mr Ladislav MIKO, Director, of DG ENV.B "Protecting the Natural Environment"
- "Water and agriculture - a scientific perspective" - Mr Leen HORDIJK, Director, Joint Research Center
- **Introductory presentations and panel debate on the different agriculture related challenges facing waters:**
 - "Water and agriculture - a DG AGRI perspective" - Mr Martin SCHEELE, Head of Unit, DG AGRI.H.1 "Environment, GMO and Genetic resources"
 - "Perspective of the agricultural industry" - Mr Luis BULHAO, Portuguese Farmers Union, Vice-Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Environment
 - "Environmental NGOs perspective on water and agriculture" - Mr Wim VAN GILS, Flemish Bond Beter Leefmilieu
 - "Views on the water industries on water and agriculture" - Mr Daniel VILLESSOT, EUREAU
 - Discussion

Day 2: Friday 3 April 2009

Reception

V: Sustainable modifications to our watercourses ? Focus on hydropower & navigation 9h00-10h30

Moderator : Ms Anne-Louise Månsson, Water Director, Sweden

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

- **Presentation on hydro-morphology in River Basin management plans** - by Ms Eleftheria Kampa, *Ecologic*
- Introductory presentations and panel debate on sustainable modifications to water courses :
 - "Managing heavily modified water bodies" - **Mr Bob DEKKER**, Water Director, Netherlands
 - "Navigation, Hydromorphology and the Water Framework Directive" - **Ms Jan BROOKE**, WFD Navigation Task Group
 - "Small hydropower and the Water Framework Directive" - **Mr Luigi PAPETTI**, European Small Hydropower Association (ESHA)
 - "New Hydropower projects vs River Basin Management Plans : what comes first?" - **Ms Paula CHAINHO**, Liga Para a protecção da Natureza, Portuguese NGO
 - Discussion

Coffee

VI: Water pricing: sending the right price signals on sustainable water use - 11h00-12h00

Moderator : Mr Eduard Interwies, InterSus - Sustainability Services

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

- **Presentation on the foreseen use of economic instruments, cost-recovery and polluter pays principle** - by Mr Pierre Strosser, *ActEon*
- Introductory presentations and panel debate on the use of economic instruments in water management :
 - "Water resources across Europe – confronting water scarcity and drought" - **Ms Maria Brättemark**, DG Environment, WFD Team (on behalf of **Ms Beate WERNER**, Head of Group on Water, European Environment Agency)
 - "Economic instrument in water management - view of the German Water industry" - **Mr Martin WEYAND**, General Director Water: Waste water, representing BDEW (German Association of Energy-and Water Industries)
 - "Water pricing and water services under the Water Framework Directive" - **Mr Sergey MOROZ**, Freshwater Policy Officer, WWF-EPO
 - Discussion

Lunch – Visit to the exhibition area

VII: The challenge of 2015 – environmental objectives and exemptions 13h30-15h00

Moderator : Mr Joachim D'Eugenio, European Commission

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

- **Presentation on environmental objectives and the use of exemptions** - by Mr Thomas Dworak, *Ecologic*
- Introductory presentations and panel debate on the ambitions of plans :
 - "Objectives and exemptions in the German River Basin Management Plans" - **Mr Fritz HOLZWARTH**, Water Director, Germany
 - "Objectives and exemptions in the UK River Basin Management Plans" - **Mr Chris RYDER**, Deputy Water Director, United Kingdom
 - "Agriculture sector's perspective on environmental objectives" - **Mr Eric JORGENSEN**, Danish Agriculture, Member of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Environment
 - "The Environmental NGO perspective" - **Mr Ralph UNDERHILL**, RSPB
 - Discussion

Coffee

VIII: "Emerging" issues in European Water management 15h30-17h00

Moderator : Mr Fritz Holzwarth, Water Director, Germany

Video links: [EN](#) [FR](#) [DE](#) [ES](#) [IT](#)

- Introduction by DG ENV
 - "Climate Change adaptation - a challenged water future" - **Mr Peter GAMMELTOFT**, Head of task force on Climate Change adaptation
 - "From land to sea – future challenges of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive" - **Mr Gert VERREET**, Marine Strategy Team, DG ENV.D.2.
- Introductory presentations and panel debate on future challenges for water management :
 - "Impacts of climate change on the water cycle : trends and challenges" - **Mr Richard HARDING**, WATCH
 - "Water for the recovery of climate - A new water Paradigm" - **Mr Jan POKORNY**, ENKI, o.p.s.
 - Statement by **Mr Jean-Philippe TORTEROTOT**, Vice president of EWA and incoming president.
 - "Water Security" - **Ms Irene LUCIUS**, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme
 - Discussion

IX: Conclusions – what will be the future legacy of today's water management? 17h00-18h00

Moderator : Mr Peter Gammeltoft, DG ENV

- Conclusions by **Mr Karl FALKENBERG**, Director General DG Environment