



# Protecting our waters

EU water legislation leading up to the  
Water Framework Directive





## Diversity of problems throughout Europe

- ☑ **Pollution of our groundwaters, rivers, lakes and regional seas**
- ☑ **flood events, but also water scarcity**
- ☑ **over-abstraction of groundwaters**
- ☑ **destruction of aquatic ecosystems and wetlands**
- ☑ **erosion and desertification**
- ☑ **challenge of EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe and Mediterranean countries**



# Groundwater problems



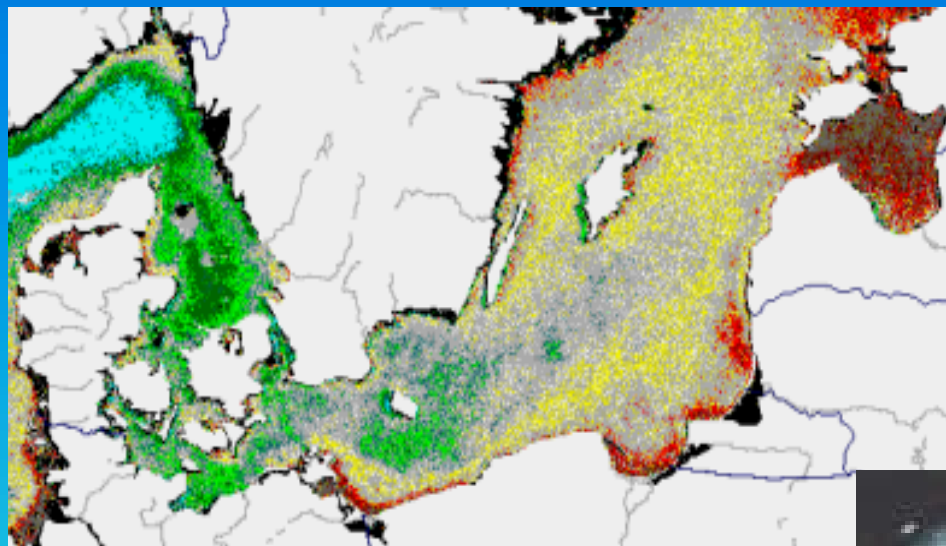
**Over-exploitation**

**Pesticides pollution**





# Marine pollution



**Eutrophication / Baltic Sea**  
(satellite remote sensing)

**'Erika' tanker disaster**





## The role of the citizen

---

**Europe's citizens are increasingly demanding a cleaner environment**

- clean water for drinking**
- clean water for bathing**
- clean and ecological sound rivers, lakes and coastal waters as part of their environment, their local and regional heritage**



---

**"Water is not a commercial product like any other, but, rather, a heritage which must be protected ..."**

**First sentence of the EU Water Framework Directive**



# Development of EU Water Policy



## Consecutive 'waves' of EU Water Policy

### First steps:

- 1976 Bathing Water Directive
- 1980 Drinking Water Directive

### Addressing pollution at the source:

- 1991 Urban Waste Water Directive
- 1991 Nitrates Pollution Directive

1998 New Drinking Water Directive

### Comprehensive restructuring and expansion

2000 Water Framework Directive

## Role of the EP

Consultation

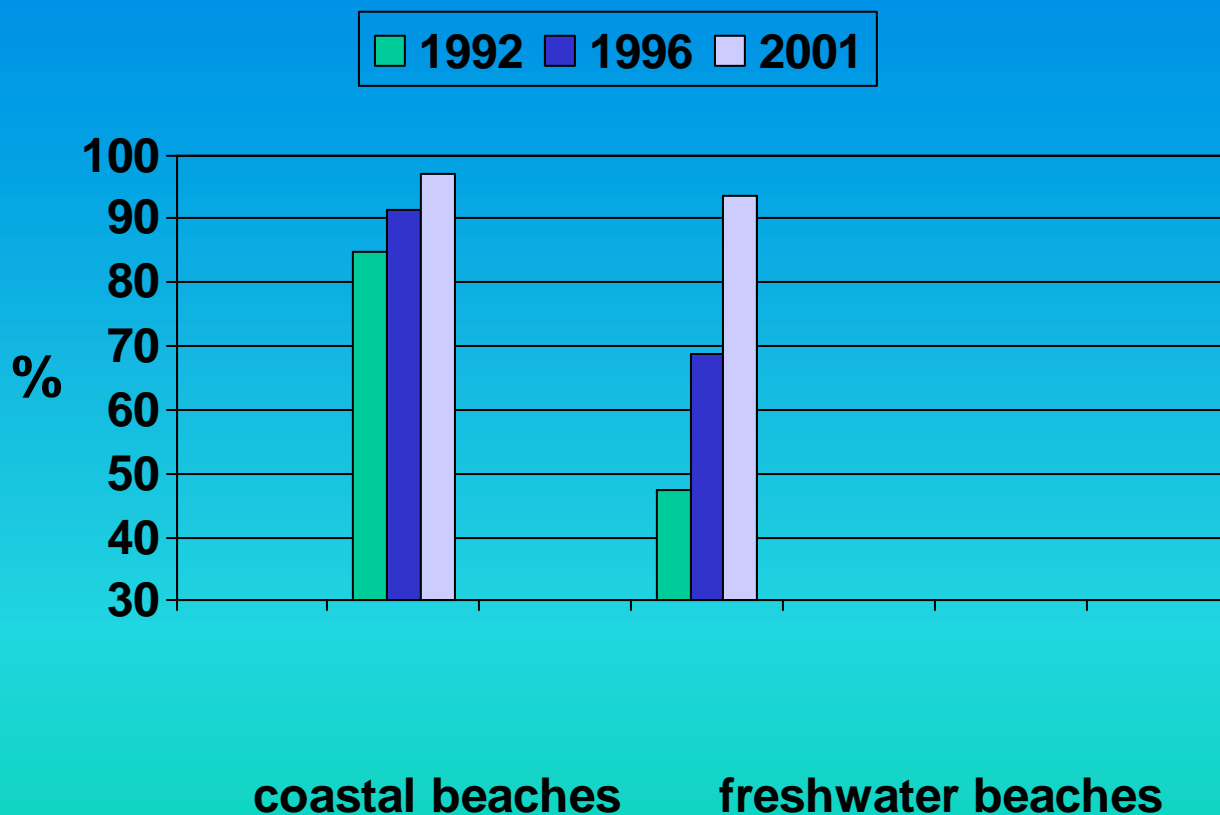
Cooperation procedure

Codecision procedure



# A European success: bathing water quality

## EU bathing areas with good quality







# Drinking Water Directive (1)

---

## 1980 Drinking Water Directive

- ⇒ had established binding microbiological and chemical values
- ⇒ had ensured a regular monitoring of drinking water
- ⇒ had provided consumers security for drinking water quality throughout the EU.

However, by the mid 1990s it was out of date as regards scientific/technical basis and the managerial approach.



## Drinking Water Directive (2)

### Main lines of the revision leading to the new 1998 Drinking Water Directive:

- ⇒ Review of parameters and values, and where necessary strengthening them (lead; pesticides; copper; new parameters where necessary, but reducing number of parameters from 66 to 48; upholding the precautionary principle (pesticides !)
- ⇒ Increased transparency - "tapwater Directive": point of use is point of compliance; obligation to report on quality; obligation to inform consumer on drinking water quality.
- ⇒ Sound basis for both the consumers throughout the EU and the suppliers of drinking water.



## Urban Waste Water Directive

- ☑ Covering all waste water (except small villages <2000 inhabitants), industry connected to local community waste water systems, and industrial waste waters (agro-food industry) directly discharging into waters
- ☑ biological (secondary) treatment as the rule,
- ☑ further (tertiary) treatment where necessary to protect the environment or bathers
- ☑ Staged implementation
  - until 1998: larger cities discharging into sensitive waters
  - until 2000: larger cities discharging into normal waters
  - until 2005: smaller cities and villages



## The new EU Water Policy: a new approach in developing policy



- ☑ **Commission Communication 1996; broad consultation with stakeholders, local and regional bodies, the scientific community and NGOs; Brussels Water Conference**
- ☑ **Commission legislative proposals 1997/98**
- ☑ **1998-2000 political negotiations with EP and Council: overwhelming majority in EP, unanimity in Council**
- ☑ **December 2000: coming into force**
- ☑ **2001 - joint implementation efforts**



## Water Framework Directive: key elements

---

- ☑ protecting all waters, surface and ground waters
- ☑ good quality ('good status') to be achieved within 15 years
- ☑ water management based on river basins
- ☑ combined approach of emission controls and water quality standards, plus phasing out of particularly hazardous substances
- ☑ economic instruments: economic analysis, and getting the prices right - to promote wise use of water
- ☑ getting the citizen involved: public participation



# River basins: scale and partners

## Rhine river basin

9 countries

Austria, Belgium, France,  
Germany, Italy,  
Liechtenstein, Luxembourg,  
Netherlands, Switzerland  
catchment area 252.000 km<sup>2</sup>





# River basins: scale and partners



**Danube river basin: 18 countries, 817.000 km<sup>2</sup> catchment area**



## **Ambitious and binding on objectives, flexible on tools**

- ☑ Environmental objectives set in a legally binding and enforceable way**
- ☑ Flexibility on choosing tools to achieve this objective**
- ☑ Within the particular river basin sufficient discretion to address the problems, looking at the regional and local circumstances as well as the technical and scientific facts**





# Staged implementation schedule

## Obligations for Member States

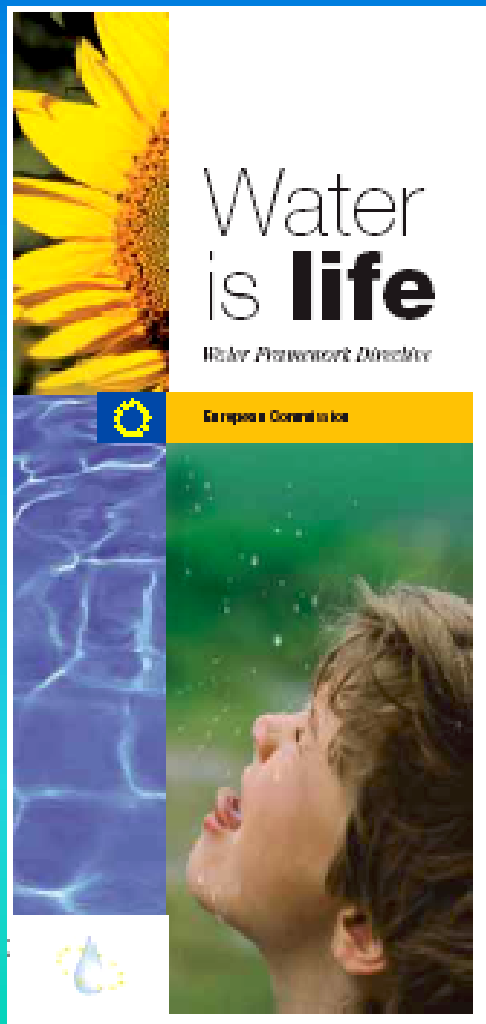
Transposition into national legislation	Dec 2003
Analysis of impacts and pressures	Dec 2004
Economic analysis of water use	Dec 2004
Monitoring programmes operational	Dec 2006
Latest date for starting public participation	Dec 2006
River basin management plans	Dec 2009

## Obligations for the Commission

Daughter Directive Groundwater (Proposal)	Dec 2002
List of Priority Substances	✓ adopted
Daughter Directive emission controls - Proposal	Dec 2003
Daughter Directive quality standards - Proposal	Dec 2003
Inter-calibration of quality classification	Dec 2004



## Further information



### **Internet**

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water>

**Folders and brochures**  
in 11 languages

### **Contact address**

[helmut.bloech@cec.eu.int](mailto:helmut.bloech@cec.eu.int)



# Further information on the Internet

**IMPORTANT LEGAL NOTICE** - The information on this site is subject to a [disclaimer](#) and a [copyright notice](#).



Europa  
The European  
Commission



Environment

## The EU Water Framework Directive - integrated river basin management for Europe

**i**  
INFORMATION

**Az**  
INDEX

**?**  
SEARCH

**@**  
MAIL-BOX

On 23 October 2000, the "Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy" or short the **EU Water Framework Directive** (or even shorter the WFD) was finally adopted.

Please find below the text of the Directive which was published in the *Official Journal (OJ L 327)* on 22 December 2000 and entered into force the same day:

[es](#) [da](#) [de](#) [el](#) [en](#) [fr](#) [it](#) [nl](#) [pt](#) [fi](#) [sv](#)

However, even after reading the Directive, you may have still questions, such as: What is this Directive about? What do I need to know about the Directive? What is currently happening in

Local intranet



## Outlook

- Ambitious implementation is as important as ambitious environmental legislation.**
- Challenge for all involved - for Member States, regions, local communities, European Commission as well as NGOs and stakeholders: need in particular as regards the necessary resources at all levels. Ongoing efforts for implementing the WFD serve as an example of Good European Governance.**
- Together will be available to deliver on our joint commitment:**



## Outlook

---

**Getting Europe's waters cleaner.  
Getting the citizens involved.**



**Thank you for your attention**

