



RESEAU INTERNATIONAL DES ORGANISMES DE BASSIN  
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS  
RED INTERNACIONAL DE ORGANISMOS DE CUENCA  
Международная сеть водохозяйственных организаций

# **The Water Framework Directive**

- Sharing experiences and meeting future challenges

**Meeting of the European River Basin District Authorities  
during the Swedish Presidency of the EU**

**August 20 – 21, 2009**

<b>EUROPE-INBO CONCLUSIONS</b>
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**For the first time in history, 29 countries in Europe, including Switzerland and Norway, were committed to jointly manage their water resources at river basin level.**

**Since 2000, huge work has been done, but important challenges are remaining.**

**ONE Hundred and ten (110) river basin districts have being established across the E.U.**

**Forty (40) are international river basin districts and they cover more than sixty per cent of the territory of the EU, making international coordination one of the most significant issue and challenge for the “WFD” implementation.**

**Next first January 2010, we will have to pass from a phase of preparation to a new phase of real implementation with an obligation of results in due time!**

**This will be an incredible challenge for all the European basin organizations...**

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**(1) AS THE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLANS are CONCERNED:**

- To tackle Europe's water challenges, the **MANAGEMENT PLANS** need to be visionary, abandoning too minimalist approaches and becoming the central tools for reinforcing our efforts.
- clearly, A significant percentage of water bodies would not reach good status in 2015. A survey shows that the percentage of water bodies achieving good status in 2015 could vary a lot, between 25% and 75%.
- We still have a lot of uncertainties about the real efficiency of certain measures mainly on hydromorphology, groundwaters, wetlands, etc....
- Even for the measures recognized as efficient, there are uncertainties about the time necessary to realize the projects in the field and the time necessary for the environments to react.
- The time factor is indeed of prime importance.
- The complete implementation of pre-existing "nitrates" and "wastewater" Directives must be at the core of the Programs of Measures.
- we may call for a true mobilization concerning agriculture: The Programs must include strong measures and actions must be coordinated at the European level.
- it will be very difficult to obtain positive results on the quality of water and ecosystems in 2015, and even in 2021, Without a true reform of the Common Agricultural Policy!
- as The functional restoration of aquatic environments is of prime importance for achieving good status, the means devoted to wetlands and hydromorphology must be increased.
- It is also urgent to reinforce protection measures for groundwater, to make for lost time, taking into account the fragility of aquifers and THE time needed for restoring degraded situations.

- how can we apply the « Renewable Energy » Directive and the “wfD” AT the same time? The hydropower infrastructures change the ecosystems, but produce renewable energy without greenhouse effect... The modernization and optimization of the existing hydropower installations are a priority.

- The issue of overseaS territories has to be underlined, especially the lack of specific references, still widely inexistent, regarding water management and WFD implementation.

- IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS, the positive role of international commissions, Where they exist, was underlined, as platformS for international coordination, supporting harmonization of practices, decision MAKING through consensus and prevention of conflicts, information exchange, etc. between riparian countries.

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- But huge work is still needed. Management Plans of International River Basin Districts still too often look like a patchwork of national elements, as each Member State remains responsible vis-à-vis the Commission for the “WFD” implementation. It is rather the sum of national plans, but better coordinated than before, which is already a progress!

- in the same international district, it appears sometimeS that the countries do not have the same priorities and deadlines, even for the same types of measures, in particular of course in basinS shared with no E.U. countries.

- everywhere, one of The PRIORITIES is transparency and publicly owned water management.

- we can now draw some recommendations from the official public consultation on the draft management plans.

- An « administrative » consultation should not be taken for a « popular » consultation of the general public, which calls upon cultural bases, images, signs of recognition and very specific media.

- Tools must be adapted to the targeted public, geographical scale, consultation objectives and to the territory specificity, especially in the international districts.

- It seems that original approaches, based on the local organization of events or on the use of local communication supports, are more effective for mobilizing the citizens than the use

of the media for a wide dissemination, the cost of which is high, for a return which is sometimes disappointing.

- It is necessary to take into account proximity and direct contact on the places of living. The passage by the relay of local authorities and of NGOs appeared to be very useful.
- in the international districts, common strategies for more public involvement may be reinforced, relying on international commissions and NGOs participation.
- It appears important to coordinate not only the consultation process and timetable, but also the content of the consultation processes, to develop a feeling of membership and identity on the whole transboundary basin scale.
- These methods, in addition to being effective, will have to be long-term ones and anticipate the improvement of other future consultations: it would be a pity just to organize a “one shot” consultation without any following UP all along the real implementation phase of the “wfd”!
- These consultations will have a cost and it is necessary to plan for significant budgets to comply with the new obligations in this field.

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## **(2) AS ADAPTATION TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE IS CONCERNED:**

- Climate change is likely to increase in Europe the frequency of extreme events, such as floods and droughts.
- It is necessary to increase the thinking about and prospective on the consequences of the climate change on water issues and the delay to react could be very short...
- A common approach is necessary to comply with the obligations of the “WFD” in critical situations.
- It is of course a necessity to anticipate the consequences of the climate change: Mitigation alone is not sufficient. Adaptation measures with regards to storing, managing, distributing and delivering water resources, are necessary.

- River Basin is the appropriate scale to **IMPLEMENT SPECIAL Action Plans** to prevent future Drought and flood Situations.
- The implementation of the Floods Directive and **“WFD”** should be closely coordinated. But coordination difficulties are encountered in practice, because the administrations in charge of flood risks and IWRM are often distinct or act on different territories/scales.
- It could be recommended to integrate right now some elements of the flood risk management plans into the 1st **“WFD”** river basin management plans.
- Transboundary basins will be heavily affected by the impacts of climate change: Upstream-downstream common cause should be increased to improve Data sharing, coordination of flood and drought warning networks and information systems and TO develop common programs for protection and adaptation.
- The regions most affected by Climate Change are in particular North Africa, THE Middle East, South-eastern Europe and the Mediterranean countries of the E.U. and Climate Change will be one of the central **ISSUES** of the new Mediterranean Water Strategy.
- When and where needed, a specific "drought management sub-plan" could be used to supplement the **“WFD”** Management Plans. Many E.U. countries already generate drought plans as part of their 'security of supply' procedures,
- should Drought management plans, at the level of basins and Water Bodies, take possible water transfers into account?
- Water saving, leak detection, recycling, the reuse of treated water, groundwater recharge, the desalination of sea water, research on low-consumption uses must become priorities in affected countries.
- it is in the interest of agriculture or industry to become less vulnerable to increasingly insecure water supplies, but there is very little in the Plans when it comes to reducing their water consumption...
- General water saving objectives are only established in five draft Management Plans.

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### **3) AS THE ELABORATION OF PROGRAMS OF MEASURES IS CONCERNED AND MAINLY THEIR ECONOMIC ASPECTS:**

We ARE now enterING in an operational step which relies less on governmental procedures than on local projects.

- The Programs of Measures should be developed on relevant hydrological scales, not only at the large river or aquifer basin level, but also in a more detailed manner AT sub-basin level.

- practical implementation necessitates the involvement of municipalities, provinces, counties, departments, regions, which will be front-liners for the investments and operation of water utilities.

- They will be in charge of practical implementation with all economic interested parties (farmers, industrialists, fishermen, tourism, etc).

- Plans for sub-basins and local programs should then be considered, in consistency with the main orientations of the District Plan.

- The search for a combination between regulatory measures, financial provisions and contractual measures when drafting a Program of Measures will require an important coordination between the various State services responsible for water management, the basin organizations and local authorities and economic STAKEHOLDERS.

- That is why the consultation procedure defined in the WFD is not sufficient in itself to mobilize local stakeholders: the effective implementation of the Programs of Measures is conditioned to the recognition of their added value by the managers of the territories.

- It is also of utmost importance for State authorities to mobilize themselves: they must be the first involved, by enforcing basic measures, controlling the effective implementation of regulations, and accompanying local stakeholders in their projects.

- **“WFD”** gives a major role to the economic analysis which remains to be improved.
- As the methods used are different from one country to another, especially in the international river basin districts, it is very important to exchange on criteria for effectiveness of measures, disproportionate cost, exemptions and extension of delays, impact on the water price.
- A Too generous use of exemptions will be a cause for concern.
- The WFD implementation will have a huge cost and can represent a **SIGNIFICANT** additional financial effort - maybe up to +30 % in some districts, probably implying the same increase on **THE** water price.
- It asks the question of acceptability by users, especially in a context of economic crisis.
- It is necessary to have real debates on financing, even if discussions can be hard: Who will pay and how much?
- We may fix realistic objectives and Spread the costs on two or three successive programs of measures because the costs are likely to be often higher than the financial resources which can be mobilized!
- we may Give necessary explanations to the consumers but also to the decision-makers to make the stakes understandable and to make the increase in the water price acceptable.
- Exemptions will be necessary, not only because of technical aspects, but also on account of financing capacities and the ability to pay of the population.
- The objectives would only be reached when the corresponding financial mobilization is possible.
- it would be advisable that The water pricing measures target the biggest water users, like agriculture, AND designed to incentivize more efficient consumption if we want significant reductions in water use **TO BE** achieved.
- We shall need money to face new water challenges!

- basin organizations WILL also need Additional human and financial resources for carrying out the huge work load of implementation and coordination!
- there is also A need for capacity building to share practical experiences between basin organizations.
- It is clear that “WFD” strongly renews the research needs: the IWRM-Net project establishes a link between researchers and basin organizations, in the specific context of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) implementation.
- The first call for research was launched at the end of 2007 dealing with: Hydrological and morphological pressures and impacts on ecological status and with Water governance. Four research projects have been funded.
- IWRM-Net partners decided to launch a second call in July this year, dealing with Climate change impacts and adaptation for IWRM, with Water scarcity and droughts, with Economics for IWRM, with social and environmental evaluation for decision-making and with incentive measures to regulate uses. The call will be closed on the 15th of October 2009.

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to conclude, let me say that Significant progress has already been made since 2000 with the european “Wfd”.

The gained experience allows now to say that the new approach at the level of river and aquifers basins is a real advantage!

Now we may go ahead for better basin management in the european union: we can do it!

Thank you for your kind attention!