

WFD

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to **Water Framework Directive Newsletter** presented by the European Commission's **Directorate General for the Environment**: a newsletter for everyone interested in European water policy and in particular the process of implementation of the Water Framework Directive, or WFD.

The aim of this newsletter is to bring you up to date with what is being done under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy, an outstanding joint effort to improve, protect and enhance the quality of our rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters and groundwaters. Published several times a year, the WFD Newsletter will bring you news of what progress has been made and new issues arising from the process. By reading WFD Newsletter we hope it will not only inform you of what is going on, but inspire you to get involved and play your part in helping to deliver one of Europe's most ambitious pieces of environmental legislation to-date. WFD Newsletter will be available electronically free-of-charge through the WFD web-page of the Environment DG (see below).

The first edition of the Newsletter, published in September 2003, was well received. Comments on the presentation of the first edition have been taken into account in the production of this second edition.

In this edition, we discuss the outcome of the recent meeting of Water Directors, held in Rome on 24 and 25 November 2003 (page 2). We examine progress in three of the pilot river basin districts (Mosel-Saar, Tevere and Odense) and look at policy developments on the issue of flooding (page 3). Of course, we also provide you with updates of the key news on the WFD, forthcoming events, meetings and workshops, and details on where to find more information.

We hope you find this newsletter enjoyable and informative; in order for us to make this newsletter as useful as possible, please send any further comments to the WFD Helpdesk (env-wfd-circa@cec.eu.int).

The Water Framework Directive - What is it?

In simple terms the Water Framework Directive (also known as the WFD or Directive 2000/60/EC) is a legislative framework to protect and improve the quality of all water resources such as rivers, lakes, groundwater, transitional and coastal water within the European Union. The WFD was published and entered into force in December 2000 (*Official Journal of the European Communities, L327, 22 December 2000, pages 1-72*). Member States must incorporate the WFD into national law by the end of 2003. Thereafter, many more steps must be taken to achieve "good status" of all European waters by 2015.

The Common Implementation Strategy

The Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive (known as the CIS) was agreed by the European Commission, Member States and Norway in May 2001. The main aim of the CIS is to provide support in the implementation of the WFD, by developing a common understanding and guidance on key elements of this Directive. Experts from the above countries and candidate countries as well as stakeholders and non-governmental organisations are all involved in the CIS process. A series of working groups and joint activities has been carried out and the results of the first two years has recently been published on a CD-ROM. The current structure and the ongoing activities are laid down in the work programme 2003/2004.


More information on the WFD and the CIS can be obtained from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html or
<http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/home>



European Commission





Feature: The main outcomes of the Water Directors' Meeting 24-25 November 2003 - Rome

The Water Directors of the European Union (EU, Acceding Countries, Candidate Countries and EFTA Countries) met on 24 – 25 November in Rome on invitation of the Italian Presidency. The Agenda included the following issues with relevance to the WFD:

- the progress of the Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive;
- the outline for a decision on a draft register of intercalibration sites;
- the concept paper on reporting and the reporting guidance for 2004;
- the finalisation of the guidance documents on wetlands and classification;
- the progress on the integrated pilot river basin testing exercise;
- integration of water policy in other policy areas, in particular agriculture policy and regional policy;
- the co-operation in transboundary river basins;

The Water Directors were able to agree on a number of issues, including two new guidance documents on the role of wetlands and on a general approach for classification of ecological status and ecological potential and the first documents towards a new reporting system. In addition, the considerable progress on the preparation of the intercalibration network and the pilot river basin exercise was recognised and timetables were agreed for 2004.

New activities for 2004 were endorsed including several workshops in the context of the new Groundwater Working Group. For other new working areas such as eutrophication and programme of measures, detailed mandates will be prepared in the coming months. High importance was given to the issue of integration of water policy into other policy areas, in particular agriculture and regional policies. The Water Directors stressed that discussions on integration issues, in particular as regards agriculture, should become a regular feature within the Common Implementation Strategy.

In addition to the discussions on the WFD implementation, also several other issues were discussed. In particular, on flood prevention it was agreed to further develop a package of joint activities on European level (see below) and the EU Marine Strategy, the terms of references for the various working groups were agreed.

The next meeting will be held in Dublin under Irish Presidency in June 2004.

Latest news on the Water Framework Directive

On 22 December 2003 was the deadline by which EU Member States had to incorporate the Water Framework Directive into their national legislation. While many Member States have done so or are about to do so, a few Member States will be several months late. The ten new Member States are expected to transpose the Directive by the date of their accession, i.e. 1 May 2004. The Commission will inform about the progress of legal transposition and implementation on its homepage and in the next newsletter.

Latest news in other water policy areas: Flood Protection and Prevention

At the recent meeting of Water Directors the European Commission (DG Environment) presented a position paper on the preparation of a European initiative on flood prevention and protection. The Commission intend to present a 'package' on flood protection by summer 2004. In addition, Germany will host an international conference under the umbrella of UNECE in June 2004. Moreover, the Dutch Presidency, in the second half of 2004, intends to have a political debate on flood prevention and protection on the informal Environment Council. Finally, the document commissioned by the Water Directors was recently finalised "**Best Practices in Flood Prevention, Protection and Mitigation**" and is available on WFD CIRCA system under: <http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/library>

water



The Pilot River Basin Network:

In the first edition of the WFD Newsletter, the Pilot River Basin Network was introduced. In this edition of the newsletter, we provide further details on three of the pilot river basins : Mosel-Saar; Tevere; and Odense. More information on the pilot river basin exercise is available on the Platform for Information Exchange of the Joint Research Centre under:

http://viso.ei.jrc.it/wfd_prb/index.html

The Mosel-Saar river basin is part of the Rhine International District and covers a surface area of 28 152 km². This surface area covers a number of national territories: France; Luxembourg; Germany (including the Saarland and Rhineland Palatinate); and Belgium. The Mosel-Saar river basin is inhabited by 4.3 million people at an average density of 160 inhabitants/km². Forestry and agriculture are the two main industries in the river basin district although in France and Saarland the catchment has been affected by iron ore and coal mining activity.

The testing of the CIS Guidance Documents in this river basin is being conducted within the context of the Mosel-Saar International Commissions for the Protection of the River Mosel and the River Saar (ICPMS) which offer a permanent secretariat and present a platform for the exchange of experiences in testing the Guidance Documents. This River Basin District is testing 4 CIS Guidance Documents. Two workshops have been organised on the identification of water bodies and on economic issues.

More information on the Mosel-Saar can be found on the following web-site:

<http://www.eau2015-rhin-meuse.fr/>

The Tevere river basin is the largest river basin in central Italy and covers a surface area of 17 500 km² encompassing a number of administrative regions. The city of Rome is located in the lower course of the Tevere river, near to the mouth and there are several other towns distributed in the basin. Agriculture is the dominant land use (53%) whilst 39% of the district is forested and 5% urbanised. The flow of the Tevere river is controlled by several hydroelectric power stations.

All the CIS Guidance Documents are being tested in this river basin district. The testing of the documents in this river basin will involve a number of national, regional and local authorities with the work co-ordinated through a working group organised by the Tevere River Basin Authority.

So far, the focus of testing has included the identification of water bodies. The river basin district has been divided into 200 sub-basins and work is ongoing to define hydrological balances for each hydrological structure. Significant analysis of groundwater/surface water interactions and groundwater quality is also being carried out using current and historic data. Working groups have been established with stakeholders using GIS and the internet for the dissemination of information.

More information on the Tevere pilot river basin district can be found on their web-site:

<http://www.abtevere.it/>

The Odense Fjord river basin is situated at the island of Fyn central in Denmark and covers a surface area of 1060 km². The Odense Fjord river basin is inhabited by 180 000 people. Agriculture (livestock and cereal production) dominates the land use in the river basin district (71%) whilst 6% is forested and 6% is covered by fens, meadows and salt marshes. 9% is urban area including Odense, Denmark's 3rd largest city.

The testing of the CIS Guidance Documents in this river basin is being co-ordinated by Fyn County in co-operation with the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, the National Environmental Research Institute and other organisations. All the CIS Guidance Documents with the exception of Guidance Document 9 on Implementing the Geographical Information System Elements (GIS) of the Water Framework Directive are being tested by this River Basin District. A number of advisory boards have been established to help steer the project with 50 local and 20 national participants.

The Odense PRB has recently published a first report on the analysis required under Article 5 of the Water Framework Directive based on the experience with Guidance Documents.

More information on the Odense Fjord pilot river basin district can be found on their web-site:

<http://prb.fyns-amt.dk/>



Upcoming meetings*

(SCG: Strategic Co-ordination Group; EAF: Expert Advisory Forum)

Working Group 2A (Ecostat)	4 - 5 March 2004	Ispra
SCG and WFD Committee	15 March 2004	Brussels
SCG and WFD Committee	27 - 28 May 2004	Brussels
EAF Priority Substances	14 - 15 June 2004	Brussels
Water Directors Meeting (Irish Presidency)	22 - 23 June 2004	Dublin
Workshop on Groundwater Monitoring	25 June 2004	Brussels

* Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are by invitation only

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who are the Water Directors?

The Water Directors are the representatives of the Member States' and other Countries' administrations with overall responsibility on water policy, the so-called Competent Authorities. In most cases, this is the head of the respective Directorate in the Environment Ministry of the countries. Informal meetings of the Water Directors of the EU Member States and the European Commission first took place on an irregular basis with the holding Presidency of the EU inviting to these meetings and chairing them together with the European Commission. Since 2000, they have become a regular event on the calendar of each Member State holding the Presidency of the European Union, hence taking place twice a year. Today, the participating countries are the 15 Member States, the ten Acceding Countries, the two Candidate Countries, the countries of the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), the European Commission and the European Environment Agency, which brings the total number of countries participating to 31. It was the Water Directors who decided the initiation and the direction the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) for the Water Framework Directive (WFD). They are monitoring its progress and drive its progress forward by agreeing a work programme of joint activities. In addition to the WFD, the Water Directors discuss all areas of relevance to European and international water policy e.g. the EU Marine Strategy and flood protection and prevention.

What is the "Article 21 Committee" or the "WFD Committee"?

Whereas the Water Directors' meeting is an informal forum to exchange information and views, the official body for discussions and formal adaptations of the Water Framework Directive is the "WFD Committee" established under Article 21 of the Directive. The Committee is an integral part of the overall implementation strategy and working structure. It deals with issues that have to be decided according to agreed procedures including clear provisions on voting rights for the different Member States. The WFD Committee was established on 6 May 2003 and it is chaired by the European Commission. Currently, the issues that the Committee will be dealing with are intercalibration and reporting. For more information on how Committee procedures work in the EU in general, see:

<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cig/g4000c.htm#c8>

Key people in the WFD: the JRC WFD Team

The *Institute of Environment and Sustainability* (IES) of the *JRC* (Joint Research Centre) has, and will continue to play a key role in the implementation of the WFD by addressing key research challenges in inland and coastal waters, and co-coordinating the important Work Group on Ecological Status (2A), acting as the Technical Secretariat of the Integrated River Basin Management WG (2B), coordinating the Pilot River Basin exercise, contributing to the WG on analysis and monitoring of priority and hazardous substances (AMPS), and contributing intensively to the development and implementation of the WFD-mandated water quality reporting activities including informatics architecture, GIS and river basin assessments, and the intercalibration metadata base. At present 20 permanent scientists and numerous visiting scientists (stagaires, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, visiting scientists) in IES participate in the scientific activities in support of DG ENV and Member States. And of course, the IES-JRC has hosted thus far nearly 20 workshops and drafting groups at Ispra, and all seem to enjoy the ambiance of the site, and collaboration and dedication of the scientific staff.



From Left to Right:

Front Row: Palle Haastруп, Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Elisabetta Canuti, Ana Cristina Cardoso, Josema Zaldivar, Martina Austoni, Steven Eisenreich. **Back row:** Georg Hanke, Jan Wollgast, Wouter van de Bund, Peeter Noges, Robert Loos, Alfred De-Jager, Guido Premazzi, Jorgen Wuertz. **Missing:** Giovanni Bidoglio, Faycel Bourari, J. Vogt, Lorenzo Galbiani

For more information, see two specific websites on pilot testing and intercalibration prepared by the JRC: http://viso.ei.jrc.it/wfd_prb/index.html and <http://ies.jrc.cec.eu.int/eewai/>



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For more information:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/>
E-mail: env-wfd-circa@cec.eu.int

A great deal of information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

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