



Water Framework Directive achieving good status by 2027

The role of rivers

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Fitness Check of the WFD-GWD-EQSD-FD

Conclusion: *Broadly fit for purpose, with room for improvement*

Water Framework Directive

- **Governance** structure set up for integrated water management; **deterioration** of water status slowed down; **pollution** reduced
- BUT implementation significantly **delayed** and less than half of EU's water bodies in good status (despite 2015 deadline)
- The objectives have not yet been reached fully largely because of:
 - 1) **Slow implementation**
 - 2) **Insufficient funding**
 - 3) **Insufficient integration** in sectoral policies (agriculture, energy, transport)

Floods Directive

- Too **early** to draw conclusions → analysis shows **flood risk management has improved**
- **Climate change** projections → Efforts needed to strengthen awareness and improve co-ordinated flood prevention

Follow-up of the WFD

Objectives to integrate in the Green Deal

Action on chemical pollution → Legislative update to keep up with science

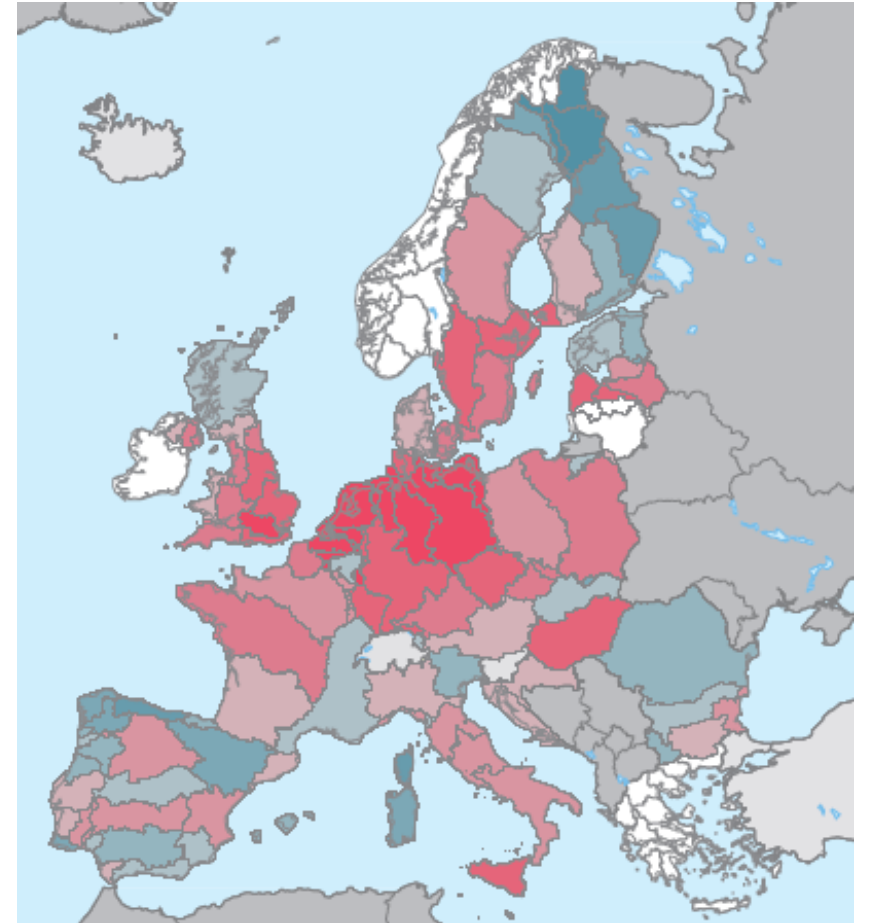
Impact assessment supporting the Commission's decisions to take legislative action to update:

- List of Priority Substances in surface waters (Annex X to the WFD) and their environmental quality standards (EQS), set in the EQSD;
- Lists of groundwater pollutants (Annexes I and II to the GWD).

Other actions (non-legislative changes)

- **Step-up the implementation:** Better implementing the existing rules (**implementation gap**);
Ensure Member States intensify their efforts on the ground and where necessary, step up use of penalties for breaches of the WFD
- Ensuring **increased investment** in water management and nature restoration;
Use “green and digital” EU Recovery package to focus attention on the benefits of smart investments in water infrastructures, river and wetlands restoration, as well as water decontamination
- Better **integrating water objectives** into other EU policies;
Horizontal measures focusing on agriculture, energy and transport
- ³• **Administrative simplification and digitalisation**, e.g. by using more real-time observations

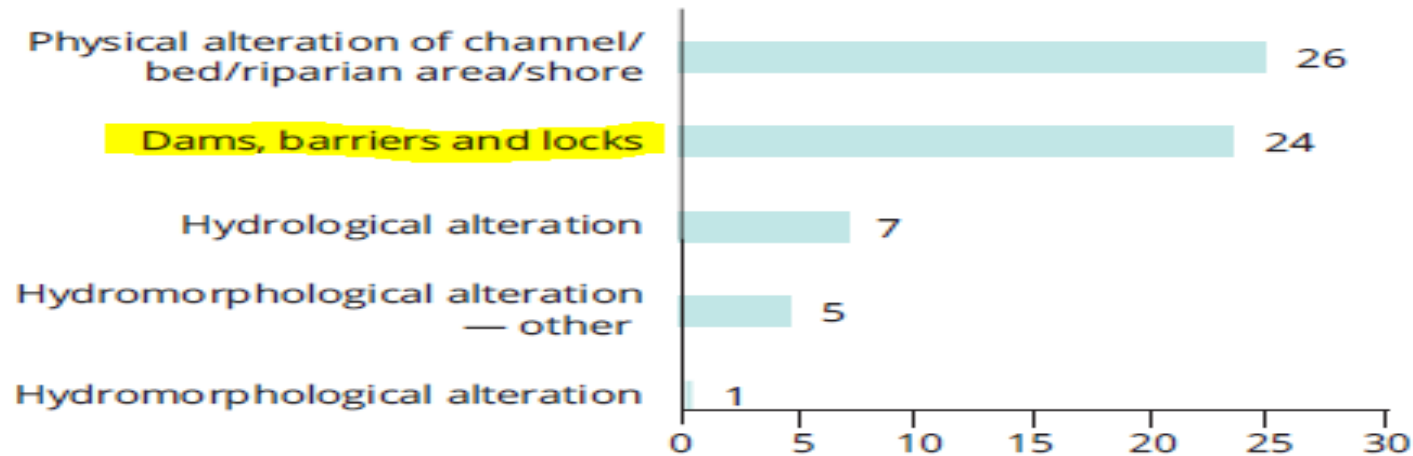
State of water & pressures



- The main significant pressures on surface water bodies are **hydromorphological pressures (40 %)**, diffuse sources (38 %), particularly from agriculture, and atmospheric deposition (38 %), particularly of mercury, followed by point sources (18 %) and water abstraction (7 %).

Role of obstacles

d) Hydromorphological pressures 2nd RBMPs



WFD and hydromorphology

- ✓ No further deterioration: new obstacles only under strict conditions
- ✓ Achieve good status: 2027 deadline
- Measures to be taken include:
 - Removing obstacles, installing fish passages
 - Reconnecting backwaters and wetlands
 - Natural water retention measures
 - Managing sediment flow
 - Restoring natural water flow regimes
 - Restoring / protecting species populations

The WFD requires action in those cases where the hydromorphological pressures affect ecological status and prevent the WFD's objectives from being achieved. If the morphology is degraded or the water flow is

Restore 25,000 free flowing rivers – what's next

- Building on experience both in Europe and elsewhere
- Definitions very important – need a metric?
- Mapping and prioritisation
 - ‘Complete’ mapping?
 - Priorities: obsolete obstacles, natural value, net effect



➤ Guidance document in 2021

- EU support will continue and should be developed further: science, best practice, finance, benefits
 - LIFE 2014-2017: 101 barriers, 3016 km of river

Biodiv. Strat - Key targets related to water

30% of EU land and sea protected, 1/3 of which under 'strict protection'

- **Freshwater ecosystems** are included

Restoration of freshwater ecosystems:

- Increased efforts to **restore freshwater ecosystems and the natural functions of rivers** – WFD objectives to be met by 2027
- **Restore at least 25,000km free flowing rivers**
 - Removal of primarily obsolete barriers
 - Restoration of floodplains and wetlands
- **Restore and preserve ecological flows** → Member States review water abstraction and impoundment permits – WFD objectives to be met by 2027

Legislation on restoration targets (2021) – targets and other elements yet to be defined (suggestions? 😊)