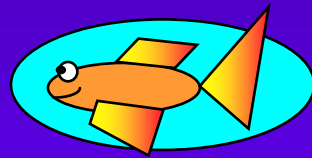




European Environmental Bureau

## EU Flood Policy

# *Towards Sustainable Water Management*



*Stefan Scheuer, European Environmental Bureau*

*EEB Water Policy Workshop, 17 March 2006*

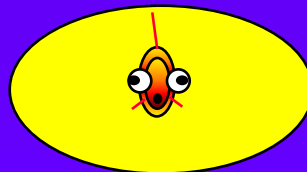
# *Content*

- *Do we need an EU Flood Policy?*
- *Is the Commission proposal going in the right direction?*
- *NGO demands*
- *Conclusions*



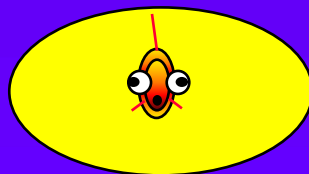
# *Do we need EU action?*

- *In theory not*
  - *the EU has already the WFD*
- *But in practice*
  - *administrative inertia and lack of political will*
- *Flooding is natural, but probability, severity and risk increased by human activities*
- *Ecological measures largely missing, like land use reforms and increasing natural retention*
- *In 21 of 24 RBDs physical changes judged to cause significant deterioration and contribute the half of all rivers failing 'good ecological status'*



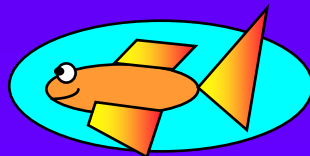
# *The Commission proposal*

- Flood risk = probability \* damage
- Objectives? Reduce flood risk for environment?
- Transparency
  - ☹ Preliminary assessment for all river basins, but in-depth work seems to focus on economic values
- Integrated management
  - ☺ Using WFD RBDs, competent authorities and WFD committee
  - ☹ Merging flood risk / management plans with WFD plans optional
- ☹ Other instruments missing
- ⇒ Soft tool with ambiguity and without steering character



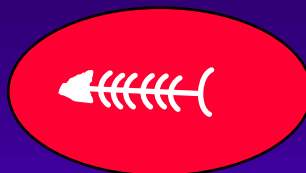
# *NGO demands*

- Need clear objective: support WFD objectives
- Merging with WFD reports/plans = less bureaucracy
- Increase transparency
  - include all important natural retention and flooding areas in flood risk maps and management plans
- Preference for ecological sustainable measures
  - reforming land use to reduce damage
  - and practices to protect and restore natural retention capacities
- Make the user pay: dykes are to be recognised as a service with financial and environmental costs, somebody has to pay

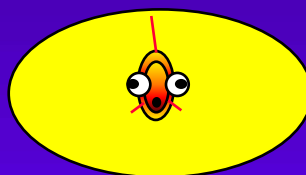


# Conclusions

- Opposition against integration of WFD and for more subsidiarity is worrying and could lead to sanctioning bad practice



- If unchanged rather indifferent to current practices



- If improved could serve to steer flood management towards ecological sustainable water management, reducing costs and be a first step in adapting to climate change

