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**EEB seminar**

**Brussels, 22 February 2008**

# **Water – the key to adapt to Climate Change**

**Unit 'Protection of Water & Marine Environment'**

**DG Environment, European Commission**



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# Introduction



## Climate Change effects on Europe's Waters

- Increasing differentiation within Europe and the exacerbation of existing problems
- The story is about too much and too little water, but let's not forget effects on water quality
- Water is a cross-sectoral adaptation issue (agriculture, tourism, energy, biodiversity, navigation)
- There is enough knowledge to act and adaptation has started, but there is much more to do within each of the policy sectors



# Introduction



## Green Paper 'Adapting to Climate Change in Europe'

- Adopted 29 June 2007
- Early action could bring clear economic benefits
- The EU plays an important role in adaptation
- Four lines of priority actions to be considered:
  - Early action where current knowledge is sufficient;
  - Integrating adaptation into the EU's external relations;
  - Filling knowledge gaps with EU-level research;
  - Setting up a European advisory group on adaptation
- Follow-up
  - Broad public debate in 2007 - 2008, including 4 regional workshops in autumn 2007 and web-based consultation;
  - White Paper and Impact Assessment November 2008.



# EU Water Policy



- **Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**
  - Overall framework for integrated management
  - Ambitious objectives (e.g. good status by 2015)
  - Establishment of river basin management plans by 2009
  - Completing the framework: groundwater (2006/118/EC) and priority Substances (negotiations ongoing)
- **Extending the scope**
  - Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)
  - Marine Strategy Directive (adopted end 2007)
  - Communication Water Scarcity and Droughts (July 2007)
- **All are tools for adapting to climate change, but full implementation is key!**



## Water Framework Directive and Climate Change

-6 year cycle for river basin management plans, starting in 2009:

Include updated knowledge on climate change (pressures, effects of measures, changing reference conditions) on next plans

-economic instruments:

Water pricing policies need to be in place in 2010 with incentive to use water efficiently

-integration with other policies:

Use stakeholder involvement (navigation, agriculture, hydropower) for drafting plans, and public participation



## Floods Directive and Climate Change

-Adopted end of July 2007

-Three stage process :

- ☑ Preliminary flood risk assessment (2011): include climate change considerations (2011)
- ☑ Flood hazard and flood risk maps (2013), based on medium and low probability floods: scenarios could include climate change
- ☑ Flood risk management plans (2015), eg addressing sustainable land use management

-Coordination and synchronisation with WFD



## Marine Strategy and Climate Change

- Environmental pillar of the EU Maritime Policy
- Framework for Strategies at the level of Marine Regions
- Overall objective: 'good environmental status' by 2021
- Similar 6-yearly cyclic management as WFD and Floods Directive: «adaptive management» can take account of climate change
- Focus on Arctic



## Water Scarcity and Droughts

**Communication** from the Commission - July 2007:

- Water scarcity and drought : **two different issues**
- Need to fully consider impacts of **climate change**
  
- Focus on **Water Demand Management**, cf energy
- Progress towards **full implementation of the WFD**
- Address ineffective **water pricing policies and water allocation**
- ~~**Water saving** must become the priority.~~



- In June 2007, the Water Directors decided to start an activity on Climate and Water
- A Strategic Steering Group was established
- First workshop Nov 2007: how to take into account climate change in river basin management planning:
  - *First river basin management plan should have a climate chapter: setting the scene, outlook to action in next cycles*
  - *First Programme of Measures should undergo a climate check*
  - *Further guidance for 2nd/3rd cycle to be developed*



# White Paper



- A Task Force has been established inside DG ENV
- Foreseen timetable: adoption after summer
- Impact Assessment will look into 'land use'
- Healthy ecosystems should be key pillar for adaptation
  
- Expert Group will be established for few meetings
- No further stakeholder consultation before adoption



# Challenges



- **Sustainable Water Management = Adaptation**
- **Ample tools for Adaptation exist at EU level**

**But:**

- **Full implementation of existing instruments**
- **Further integration & involvement of all other sectors**
- **Water pricing: polluter/user pays should become more regular**



## Discussion



- **Full implementation of existing water legislation, but:**

- Is more guidance needed?
- How to avoid that climate change is used as an excuse for bad implementation?

- **Further integration & involvement of all other sectors:**

- Do 'good examples' exist in your networks/MS?
- Are there data on costs/benefits of early adaptation in your networks/MS?



## More information



### **EC Water Website:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index_en.htm)

### **Water Information System for Europe (WISE):**

<http://water.europa.eu>

### **Outcomes CIS workshop November 2007:**

[http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework\\_directive/implementation\\_convention/workshop\\_november&vm=detailed&sb=Title](http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/implementation_convention/workshop_november&vm=detailed&sb=Title)

**Thank you for your attention!**

