Review of the Water Framework Directive - current status and outlook

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Outline of the presentation

1. The Water Framework Directive in a nutshell
2. Success and challenges
3. The Water Framework Directive evaluation
4. Outlook and next steps
The Water Framework Directive’s cornerstones

Established in 2000

- Non-deterioration
- 100% target
- Holistic approach
- Economics
- River basin approach
- Public participation

1. The WFD in a nutshell
WFD Successes

✓ Deterioration has been halted
✓ Better monitoring
✓ Decrease in pollution with some harmful substances
✓ An improvement in groundwater quantitative status by about 5% since the first planning cycle.
✓ The costs of not implementing the water related environmental acquis and achieving its objectives would result in annual costs in the range of 5-20 billion € (Blue2 study, 2019).
WFD challenges

- Only 40% of surface water and 74% of groundwater in good status
- Long-standing issues: Hydromorphology is the biggest pressure on surface water; agriculture; persistent chemicals
- Uneven implementation across Member States
- Water pricing principles insufficiently applied
Exemptions are largely used

WFD evaluation

Scope:
- **Water Framework Directive** (WFD, 2000/60/EC), and its 'daughter Directives':
  - **Groundwater Directive** (GWD, 2006/118/EC) and
  - **Environmental Quality Standards Directive** (EQSD, 2008/105/EC);

Timeline:
- **October 2017**
  - Publication of the evaluation roadmap
- **September 2018-March 2019**
  - Public consultation
- **July 2019**
  - First draft of the SWD rejected by the European Regulatory Scrutiny Board
- **November 2019**
  - Second version of the SWD submitted to the European Regulatory Scrutiny Board
- **Early 2020 or end of 2019**
  - Final SWD and consultants’ study

5 evaluation criteria:
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Relevance
- Coherence
- EU added value
The #ProtectWater campaign

https://www.livingrivers.eu/
Status of EU water legislation

1. Groundwater & EQS directives
2. Floods directive
3. Basic measures
4. Water reuse regulation

- New
- Legislative proposal in discussion
- Evaluation ongoing
A new European Commission

“To help us achieve our ambition, I will propose a European Green Deal in my first 100 days in office.”
As part of the European Green Deal, we will present a Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. […] European citizens’ health and the planet’s health go together: it is the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the safety of the products we use.

“For the health of our citizens, our children and grandchildren, Europe needs to move towards a zero-pollution ambition. I will put forward a cross-cutting strategy to protect citizens’ health from environmental degradation and pollution, addressing air and water quality, hazardous chemicals, industrial emissions, pesticides and endocrine disrupters.”
The European Green Deal: opportunities

1. Climate neutral Europe
   - Opportunity for restoration of water ecosystems important for climate mitigation and adaptation

2. EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
   - Opportunity for development of nature-based solutions and carbon sinks; and measures to improve river connectivity

3. Circular economy action plan; Farm to fork strategy...
   - Opportunity to work on end-of-pipe solutions and consumer behaviour

4. Zero Pollution ambition > Water action plan
   - Opportunity for water quality improvement > EQS, groundwater directive annexes review, pharmaceuticals…
Next steps

European Commission:

• Publication of fitness check conclusions (early 2020)

• Communication on the European Green Deal (a few weeks after official start)

• EU Water Action Plan (September 2020)

• Final decision about WFD revision (tbc)

Member States:

• Reaction to fitness check conclusions > Council conclusions? (Environment Council 5 March 2020 tbc)

• Preparation of third River Basin Management Plans (2022-2027)
To conclude… we need
Thank you for your attention

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