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Water Scarcity and Drought

Last updated in October 2012

Latest Developments

On 7 and 8 July, the Informal meeting of Ministers for the Environment and Climate Change took place. Environment Minister, Mr. Aletraris, stated that the aim of the Cypriot Presidency was to encourage a fruitful discussion between the ministers to develop concrete proposals on water. He also claimed that the Cypriot Presidency would contribute to the final shape of the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources, as well as to relevant Council Conclusions, to be adopted next December at the Council of Environment Ministers.

During the Informal Meeting, the below priority actions that foster integration and implementation of water policy were highlighted:

- Achieving a more efficient water governance
- Improving the knowledge base
- Managing water demand
- Protecting water ecosystems
- Increasing the availability of clean water
- Improving drought management
- Increasing the use of economic instruments
- Promoting innovation and strengthening global cooperation

Moreover, the meeting acknowledged that the rising water demand and the impacts of climate change were expected to increase the pressure on water resources and phenomena such as water scarcity, droughts and floods. As a result, there is a need to underline the importance of increased efficiency in water use and improved resilience to extreme weather events.

Next steps of the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources are:

- **Mid-Nov:** Commission expected to table its 'Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources'
- **26-27 Nov:** Conference on the water blueprint scheduled in Nicosia

Moreover, In September, the first debate on the WFD's priority substances was held in the Environment Committee of the European Parliament. The discussion focused on the proposed pharmaceutical substances and whether or not they should be included as priority substances in the report. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) continue to be divided on this issue, with the Conservatives and some of the Liberals being against the inclusion of these substances and the Socialists and Greens supporting them for inclusion.



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MEPs have until 7 November to table amendments to the Commission proposal. The report will be voted in the European Parliament's Environment committee on 28 November.

On 13th August Marc Tarabella, a Belgian MEP (S&D), raised a couple of questions on how the Commission would support the plan to safeguard water resources, given that water is 'a fundamental and universal right'. He particularly questioned the Commission's position on applying the principle of user-pays and whether the Commission intended to review subsidies that were harmful for water resources and the grant of EU funds to the water sector.

Link:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2012007595%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

The European Environment Agency published a report '[Territorial cohesion and water management in Europe: the spatial perspective](#)' on 28th August. The report is about management of Europe's water resources with recommendations of better integrating of coordinated spatial planning and water management. It addresses the fact that river basins and administratively distinct regions often have different boundaries, leading to a mismatch between land planning and water management. It suggests that the EU Water Framework Directive, which is implemented through River Basin Management Plans, should take this concern into consideration. The report argues that water basin management should be more closely integrated with spatial planning, which would bring a more strategic focus to planning and managing water resource.

For more information, please find the press release below:

http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/managing-water-and-human-activities-together?utm_source=EEASubscriptions&utm_medium=RSSFeeds&utm_campaign=Generic

Impact for golf management

- Irrigation
- Water management

Background

Overall assessment of water scarcity developments and impact on golf in Q2 2012:

On 11 June, the EU Member States agreed on the launch of the [European Innovation Partnership on Water \(EIP\)](#), proposed by the European Commission earlier in May. The general objective of the EIP on Water is to boost innovation in tackling main European problems related to water and to bring the developed solutions to the market. The initiative should facilitate cooperation between all relevant public and private actors in the field of water.

The EIP outlines a set of following targets to be achieved by 2020:

- Implementation of all [River Basin Management Plans](#) by 2015
- Reduce water losses to sustainable levels across the EU with special attention to the



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regions vulnerable to such losses

- Limit water abstraction to maximum of 20% of available renewable water resources in all European regions

The works on the Strategic Implementation Plan should begin in September and conclude in December 2012. The programme is expected to be fully operational in Q1 2013.

Please, find below the link to the adopted EC communication on EIP on Water:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/470&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

On 2 July, the European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Richard Seeber (Austria, EPP) on water. The report comes in light of the European Commission's upcoming "Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources" which is expected to be published in November 2012. Seeber emphasized the importance of the accurate implementation of the legislation being already in place and stressed the possibility of adopting new legislative acts, if necessary. The report underlined that reducing water consumption should be a priority goal. The EP proposed to condition any current and future subsidies for projects that may negatively impact water.

Please, find below the link to European Parliament's report on water:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-273>

Last Update in April 2012:

Overall assessment of water scarcity developments and impact on golf in Q1 2012:

In Q1 the Commission continued to work on its Blueprint on European Waters by seeking input from European Stakeholders on the most appropriate actions to improve water management in Europe and to safeguard water resources for all users. The Commission also continued to publish reports on various specific issues such as the impact of agriculture on water that will feed into the Blueprint that is now set to be published at the end of 2012. Austrian Member of European Parliament, Richard Seeber, is also putting together an own initiative report on water scarcity and droughts in the European Union that will be included in the Commission's Blueprint as well.

Moreover, the European Commission also published an EU survey on the attitudes of Europeans towards water related issues.

On 22 March, the European Commission published the results of a survey asking Europeans their concerns on EU waters. The results conclude that more than 90% of citizens in every single EU Member State care deeply about the environment and that fresh water is an issue that is very close to the hearts of Europeans. As for water quality, 48% of Europeans feel that water quality has either improved or stayed the same in the last 10 years; 44% feel it has deteriorated.

These perceptions that are very much linked to the specific situation of the local environment where people live indicate people's concerns and outline the potential gaps that still exist in water legislation. The Commission will also analyze these gaps and try to address them in its



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Blueprint this year.

Link: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_344_sum_en.pdf

On 28 March, the World Wide Fund (WWF) together with the German development finance institution DEG (Deutsche Investitions und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH) have launched an online tool to help companies and investors to address their water-related risks. On the basis of a questionnaire, a user can identify risks and receive advice on how to mitigate it. The WWF and DEG recognize the significance of water supply for virtually all of the sectors.

Link: http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?203999/Simple-tool-helps-companies-address-water-risks

On 20 January, the European Commission has published a report "Water saving potential in agriculture in Europe". Figures show that agriculture accounts for ¼ of total water abstraction in Europe. In the South, however, it may reach up to as much as 80%. Therefore, managing water use in agriculture has been identified as one of the key themes relating to water scarcity and drought.

Link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/pdf/BIO_Water%20savings%20in%20agriculture_Final%20report.pdf

Overall assessment of water scarcity developments and impact on golf in Q4 2011:

As 2012 is the year of water, there has already been increasing activity around this issue. Currently DG Environment is preparing the Blueprint on European Waters and is engaging with stakeholders to make the assessment most accurate. This new document will look at water management and drought, and water quality. It will aim to ensure good quality water in sufficient quantities for all legitimate uses.

On 27 October, under the recommendation of Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik, the Commission is forwarding a letter urging Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Sweden to comply with their national legislation.

Link: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1264&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

On 9 December, MEP Louis Grech (S&D) submitted a written question aiming to know the Commission's response in case of exploitation of water privatization and whether the Commission intends to propose a holistic, overarching strategy for sustainable access to water

Link: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2011-011684+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

On 13 December, during the Environment meeting on waste water treatment challenge it has been noted that in the period between 2007 and 2013, around 14 billion EUR will be allocated across the EU to build infrastructure for the collection and treatment of waste water under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWT). In particular, the purpose of these projects is to prevent human and industrial waste from adversely affecting human health and the environment.

Link: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1531&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



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[ed=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en](#)

Overall assessment of water developments and impact on golf in Q3 2011:

The EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs highlight the importance of meeting the Millenium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the amount of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015, whilst the Commission has also threatened to take various Member States to court over a failure to properly implement various aspects of EU water policy legislation. A European Commission report was also published, which looked at how global crop production affects water and land use.

Speaking in August, the EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs highlighted the importance of meeting the Millenium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. He noted that progress has been made in this regard, and that of all the MDGs this was one of the most likely to be met.

[European Commission Press Release](#)

At the end of September the European Commission threatened to take several Member States to court for failing to meet various water policy regulations. Germany is being threatened on the grounds that its interpretation of the cost recovery principle for water services is too narrow. Italy meanwhile may be taken to the European court for failing to set up a proper network of waste management installations in the Campania region, whilst both Belgium and Romania must fully transpose the revised water framework directive (WFD) into national law to avoid court action.

[Press release](#)

On 23 September the European Commission published a study, which looks at the water consumption and land use for the production of 160 of the globally most prevalent crops. It found that global production of wheat, rice, cotton, maize and sugar cane together accounted for 49% of water scarcity and 42% of land resource stress worldwide. The study also notes that in central and northern Europe the effect of crop production on water scarcity is minimal, since the majority of the supply is rain fed.

[Press Release](#)

Overall assessment of water developments and impact on golf in Q2 2011:

In the run up to 2012: "the Year of Water", there continued to be more and more conferences and dialogue on water sustainability. The European Parliament and Commission have already started working in this area and are currently preparing the "Blue print for safeguarding Europe's water" and the review of the Water Framework Directive. These documents are expected by the end of 2011. In addition, in the last couple of months other EU institutions, such as the Committee of the Regions, have begun discussions on water sustainability. 2012 will be an opportunity fir the EGA GCC to promote its best practice on sustainable golf course management.



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On 30 June, the EU Committee of the Regions (CoR) proposed fixing '20-20-20' objectives for water similar to those set for energy and climate. In an opinion adopted in the Committee of the Regions plenary session, the committee stressed that "Europe must do more to ensure the sustainable use of water or risk failure in its battle against climate change and an increasing risk of both droughts and floods". Moreover, the CoR calls for a multilevel, cross-border approach to the management of river basins and proposes extending the Covenant of Mayors to include sustainable water use.

[Press release on the opinion from the CoR](#)

On 21 June, EU Environment ministers concluded that the European Union is still facing challenges in water management. The Ministers called for "full and timely implementation of relevant EU legislation". They went on to welcome the European Commission's intention to propose, in 2012, a programme to safeguard Europe's water resources.

The Council conclusions also invite the Commission to set up an innovation partnership on water in close cooperation with the member states, with a view to achieving sustainable and efficient use of water and to draw up a road map for water-related research as part of the next EU framework R&D programme. The Council also calls for further development of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE).

[Council Conclusions](#)

In the spring, the European Commission published the third report on the progress in addressing water scarcity and drought in Europe. The report is currently being reviewed by the Environment Committee in the European Parliament. This review of Water Scarcity and Droughts along with the analysis of the Implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the review of the vulnerability of environmental resources such as water, biodiversity and soil to climate change will be integrated into a planned "Blueprint to safeguard European waters" that should be finalized by 2012.

[European Commission on Water Scarcity review](#)

In May, the European Commission announced that next year's Greenweek will be on water scarcity and drought. As usual, the European Commission will open to stakeholders the possibility of presenting a stand on water sustainability. Stakeholders will be invited to submit their proposals for a stand in April 2012.

On 30 March, the European Parliament's Intergroup on Water held a meeting. The meeting was chaired by MEP Richard Seeber (EPP, Austria). Mr. Seeber stated that he is unhappy that the Commission review of the Water Framework Directive proposal will only come out in June. He stated that the Commission should do more in this field especially in the run up to 2012: the year of water. He also stated that he does not believe that the Commission will come up with anything new in its "Blue print for safeguarding Europe's water" which is also expected in 2012.

Mr. Seeber acknowledged how important it is to monitor hazardous waste, pesticides and



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chemicals and their impact on water. In the meeting, participants also agreed that the “old” Member States should help the “new” member states, such as Poland, Czech Republic, etc. to implement better practices to monitor the impact chemical and pesticide emissions have on water. They also agreed that there needs to be harsher sanctions on companies to encourage them to promote better practices. Mr. Seeber confirmed that waste from chemicals is transported mainly by water and that this is an international problem as water has no boundaries. He called for Member States to effectively monitor waste that ends up in water and asked for Companies to be responsible in this area. He highlighted that it will be part of the discussions with the upcoming Water Framework Directive.

On 25 March, European Commissioner for Environment, Janez Potočnik, spoke at an informal meeting of EU environment ministers in Hungary on the 2012 Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water, which aims at ensuring a sufficient amount of good quality water for all legitimate uses. The paper will be based on the Commission's assessment of the River Basin Management Plans, a review of the Water Scarcity and Drought Policy and an assessment of the vulnerability of water resources to climate change and other pressures. Member States agreed on the need for an integrated approach on the future of water resources and the Hungarian Presidency aims at adopting a Council conclusion on the sustainable use of water in June.

[Speech by Janez Potočnik](#) and [Article from the Hungarian Presidency](#)

On 22 March, the European Environment Agency (EEA) introduced a new version of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), which will provide information on water statistics online, complementing existing water policy webpages from the European Commission and the EEA. The first version of WISE was launched in 2007 and compiles information on surface and ground water.

[Europe's water information at your fingertips](#)

On 22 March, the head of the European Commission's unit on water, Peter Gammeltoft, explained at an event organized by the Committee of the Regions that the EU water blueprint will contribute to the set up of water efficiency targets as well as fair pricing approaches. The efficiency targets will take into account local circumstances and will be set at national, sectoral and river basin level.

[Article on “EU water blueprint to pave way for savings targets”](#)

On 21 March, the European Commission published its final report on Member States' water management measures against scarcity and droughts in advance of the EU water policy review in 2012. The report found that a majority of Member States have not acted upon the non-binding policy recommendation and that water scarcity and droughts are an increasing problem in Europe.

[2010 Follow-up Report](#)

On 28 October, the Commission issued a series of infringement actions against member states implementing river basin management plans. More specifically, France is being taken to court



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for failing to notify measures implementing the 2007 Floods Directive while Malta, Greece, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Slovenia and Portugal are being sent a final warning before court action over river basin management plans.

Commission press release requesting [Member States to submit their river basin management plans](#) and comply with [EU environmental legislation in the area of flood prevention](#)

In October, it was confirmed that the European Commission will consider new measures to decrease water consumption in buildings, agriculture and other areas. A major review of the current EU water legislation will be completed by 2012 which will be reflected in the Commission's "Blueprint for Safeguarding Europe's Water".

This document will be based on the EU's current strategy on water scarcity and droughts, a review of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and a review of the vulnerability of water resources to climate change and other man-made pressures.

The Commission is considering tabling a new EU directive on water efficiency in buildings similar to the one adopted on the energy performance of buildings. The same applies for efficiency standards for water using products, along the lines of EU legislation on eco-design requirements for energy-using products. The Commission has also identified agriculture as a priority sector in which measures to combat water scarcity need to be considered.

[Article on EU "Blueprint for Safeguarding Europe's Water"](#)

The increasing focus of the Commission on water usage was also illustrated by the publication of the Energy Trends 2030 report which argues that the increasing demand for electricity is putting a strain on water resources. This is all the more worrying as the introduction of electric cars and renewable energy policies will lead to an increased electrification of the energy supply in Europe.

[Article on European Commission's Energy trends to 2030 report](#)

Last Update in October 2010:

In October, the Danish Society for Nature Conservation submitted a complaint to the Commission regarding the river basin management plans of Denmark. The NGO claimed that the plans were "diluted to such a degree that the goals cannot possibly be reached". The Danish government had been reacting to increasing pressure by its agricultural sector, according to the NGO.

The Danish water management targets include cuts of 19,000 tonnes in coastal discharges of nitrogen and 210 tonnes of phosphorus in lakes by 2015. Denmark is also consulting on a wildlife plan, which among other things, specifies landscaping in 130,000 hectares to prevent overgrowth and improved water conditions in 16,000 hectares subject to drainage and drying.

[Danish NGO press release \(in Danish\)](#)

In September, the 2010 World Water Week organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) took place. One issue of particular concern was the increasing disposal of waste in water sources and the attendant increase of chemical pollutants such as



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nanoparticles, in water. SIWI noted that water pollution is increasing globally with an estimated two million tonnes of waste disposed daily in watercourses and with 70% of industrial wastes in developing countries dumped untreated into waters. The main issue of concern during the conference were the pollutants found in water which subsequently enter the sewage systems; these include nanoparticles, chemicals and pharmaceutical residues.

[Article on World Water Week](#)

On 7 September, WWF published the report commissioned by the World Bank entitled "Flowing Forward". The report argues that effective water management will be central to adapting to climate change and also offers a set of tools to achieve "climate-sustainable water management". Most importantly, according to the report, the tools needed to render water management more sustainably are already at hand such as methods for river basin and water resource management.

[WWF Report "Flowing Forward"](#)

Links

Link to European Commission press release on *Environment: Commission urges seven Member States to submit river basin plans*:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1413&format=HTML>

Link to European Commission press release on *Environment: France taken to Court and Luxembourg given warning over failure to notify flooding legislation*:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1423&format=HTML>

Link to UNEP Bioenergy and Water Issue Paper:

http://www.unep.fr/energy/bioenergy/issues/pdf/Issue%20Paper%20No.2_FINAL.pdf

Link to EU Energy Trends 2030 Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/trends_2030/doc/trends_to_2030_update_2009.pdf