



Fitness Check of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive

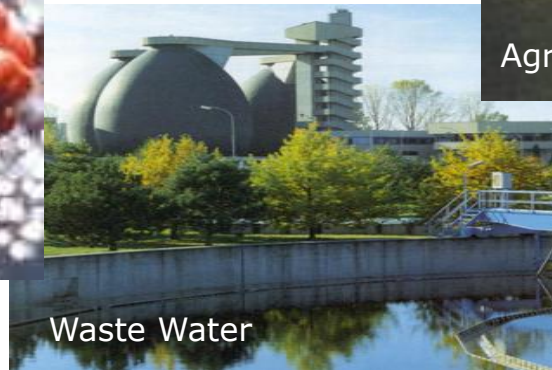
SWD(2019)439 final
10 December 2019



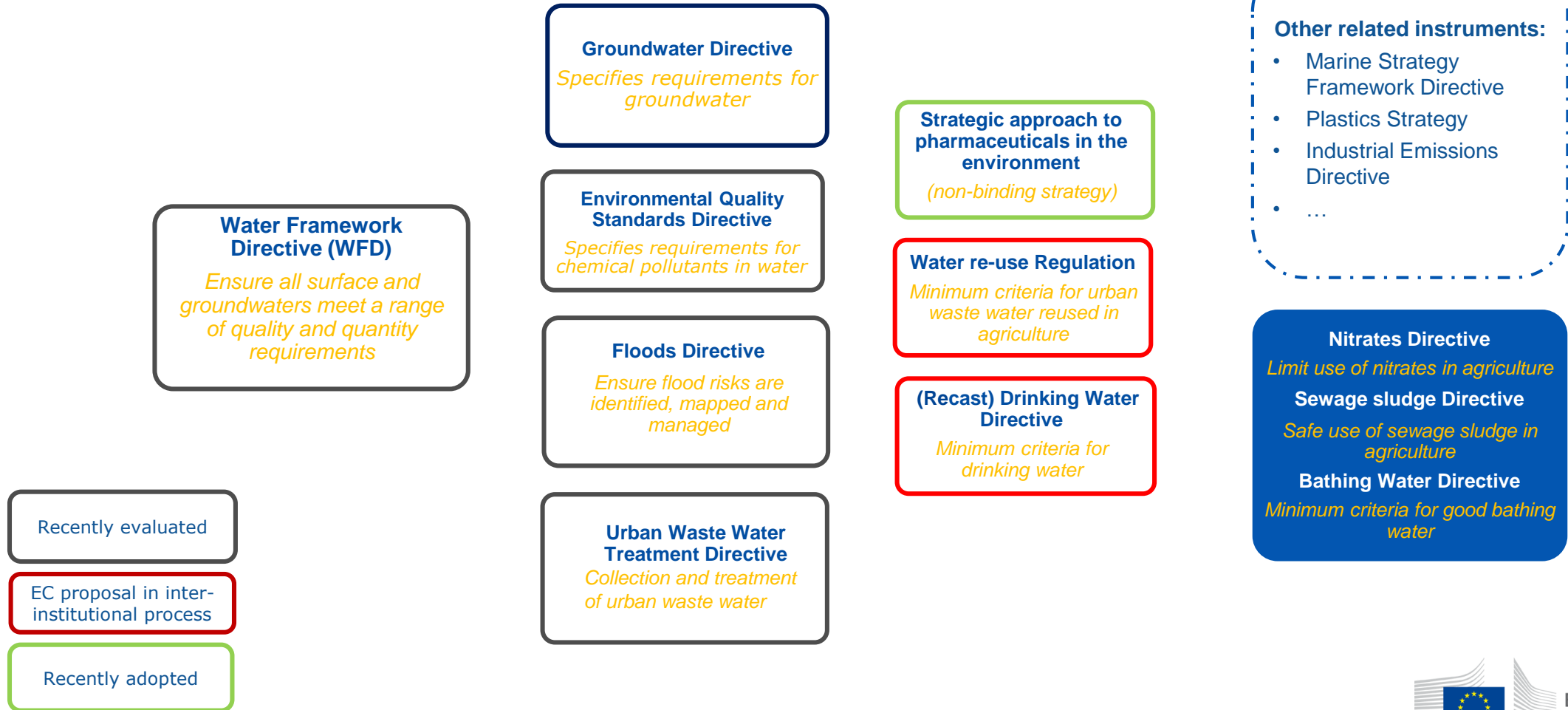
*European Commission
DG ENV C.1 – Clean Water*

Various uses, demands, pressures and impacts

Water is a cross-cutting issue



EU Freshwaters – instruments



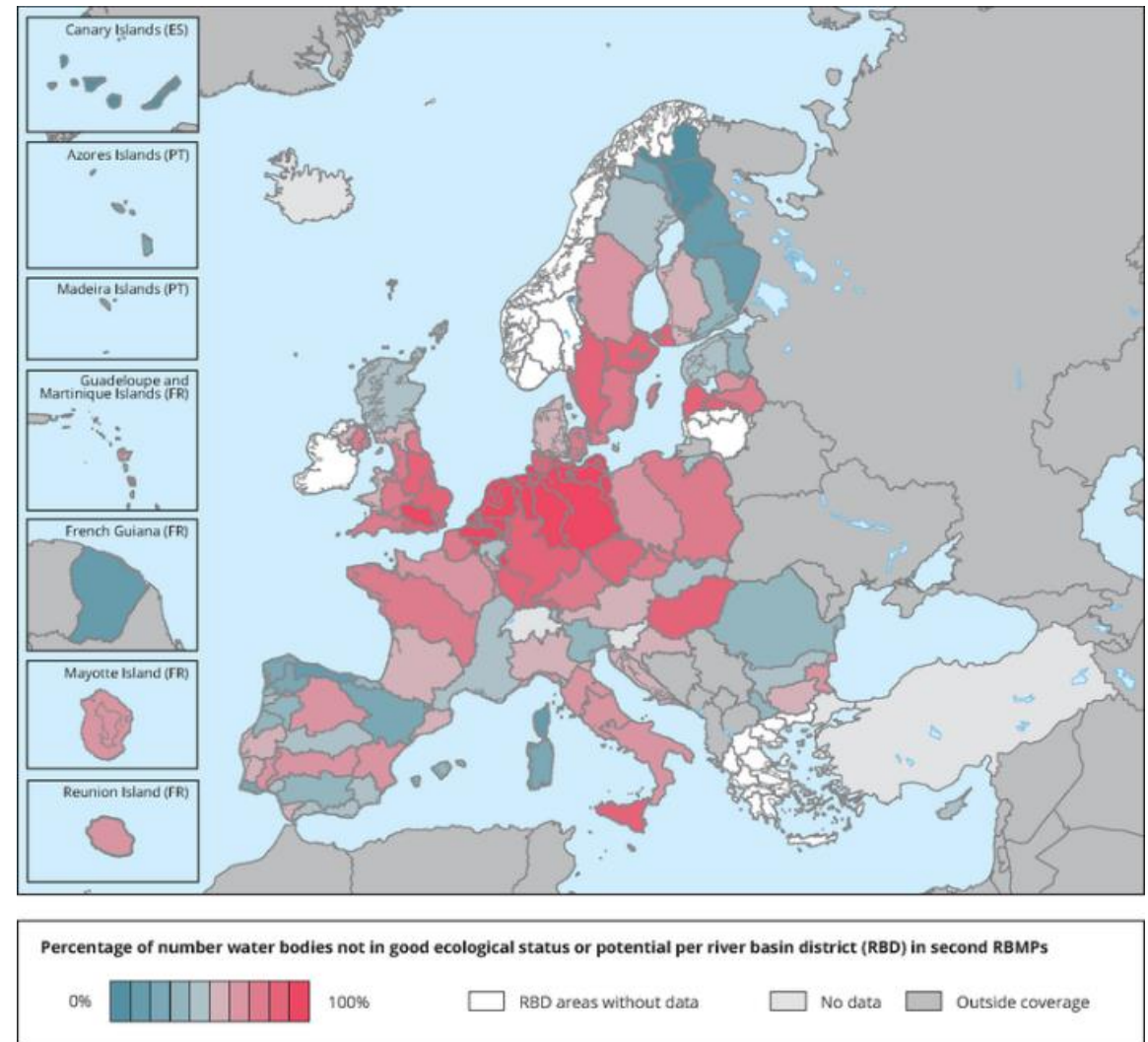
Stock-taking process of EU waters

1. EEA Reports:
 - ‘European waters – assessment of status and pressures’ (July 2018);
 - ‘The European environment — state and outlook 2020’ (December 2019)
2. Commission’s 5th implementation report on WFD and FD (February 2019)
3. Fitness Check of Water Framework Directive and Floods Directive (December 2019)

EEA Report 2018

State of play

- Around 40% of surface water bodies in good or high ecological status
- 74% of groundwater in good chemical status and 89% in good quantitative status
- Most common pressures for surface water: hydromorphology, diffuse source pollution, atmospheric deposition, point source pollution and abstraction
- Most common pressures for groundwater: diffuse source pollution, abstraction and point source pollution



5th Implementation Report

26 Feb 2019

- Report of the EC to the EP and Council –COM (2019) 95 final-
- General EU situation
- Specific assessments and recommendations by Member State
- International Cooperation Reports

About this site | Contact | Sitemap | Search | Legal notice | Cookies | English (en)



ENVIRONMENT

European Commission > Environment > Water > Water Framework Directive

Home | About us | Policies | Funding | Legal compliance | News & outreach

Water

- Fitness Check of the EU Water Legislation
- Blueprint
- River Basin Management
 - Water Framework Directive
 - WFD - what is it about?
 - Implementation Reports**
 - Status of adoption of RBMPs
 - WFD implementation links
 - Economic Analysis
 - Groundwater
 - Common Implementation Strategy
- Flood Risk Management
- Water Scarcity and Droughts
- Drinking Water
- Bathing Water
- Emissions and Water Reuse
- Adaptation to Global Change
- Conferences and Initiatives
- Water Eurobarometer

WFD and FD Implementation Reports

The fifth Water Framework Directive Implementation Report – assessment of the second River Basin Management Plans and the first Floods Directive Implementation Report – assessment of the first Flood Risk Management Plans (2019)

In accordance with Article 18 of the Water Framework Directive and Article 16 of the Floods Directive, the Commission must publish a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of these Directives after each update of the River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans respectively.

The Commission Report must include among other things a review of progress in the implementation of the Directives and an assessment of the Plans, including suggestions for the improvement of future Plans. The report also includes an assessment of the international cooperation under the implementation of the Directives.

This 5th Implementation Report was adopted on 26/02/2019 and consists of the following documents:

- A [Commission report](#) to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (assessment of the second River Basin Management Plans) and the Floods Directive (assessment of the first Flood Risk Management Plans), and an [Annex with recommendations](#) to all Member States on both Directives
- [A European Overview of the second River Basin Management Plans](#) - Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report
- [A European Overview of the first Flood Risk Management Plans](#) - Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report
- **Country-specific assessments for EU Member States' second River Basin Management Plans** - Commission Staff Working Documents accompanying the report : [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Croatia](#), [Czech Republic](#), [Cyprus](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Hungary](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#), [The Netherlands](#), [UK](#)
- **Country-specific assessments for EU Member States' first Flood Risk Management Plans** - Commission Staff Working Documents accompanying the report : [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Croatia](#), [Czech Republic](#), [Cyprus](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Hungary](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#), [The Netherlands](#), [UK](#)
- [Report on the international cooperation under the Water Framework Directive](#) - Commission Staff Working Documents accompanying the report
- [Report on the international cooperation under the Floods Directive](#) - Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report

Fitness Check [SWD (2019)439 final]

Scope:

Comprehensive policy evaluation of 4 pieces of water legislation:

- Water Framework Directive (**WFD**) – Dir 2000/60/EC
- Environmental Quality Standards Directive (**EQSD**) – Dir 2008/105/EC
- Groundwater Directive (**GWD**) – Dir 2006/118/EC
- Floods Directive (**FD**) – Dir 2007/60/EC

Objectives:

- Assess the performance of the Directives
- Check whether they are fit for purpose according to the EC Better Regulation Agenda
- Art. 19(2) WFD → Review the Directive the latest 19 years after its entry into force (19 December 2000)

Criteria:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Coherence
- EU added value

Fitness Check [SWD (2019)439 final]

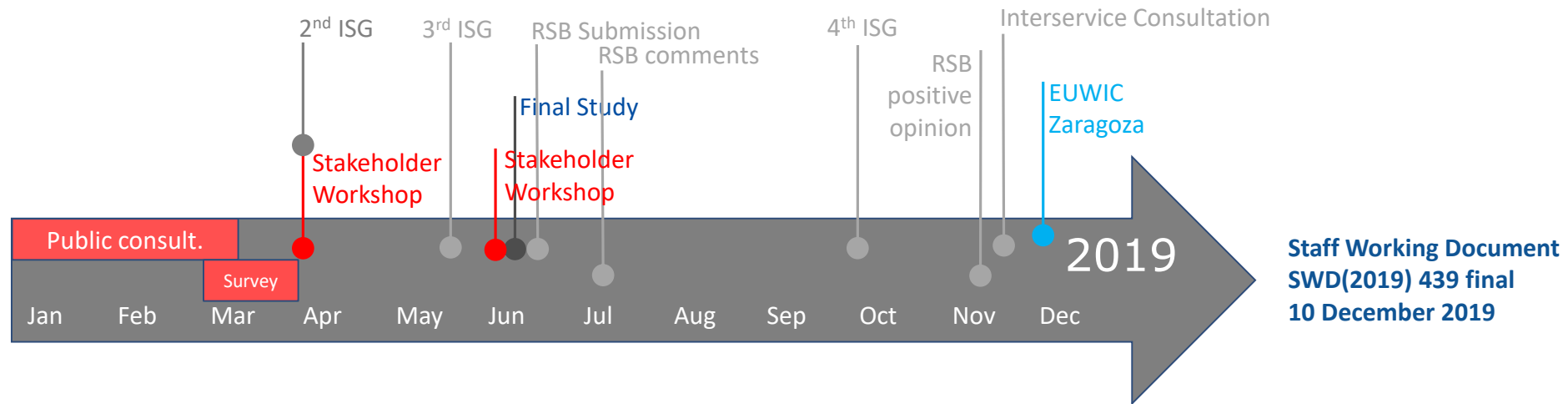
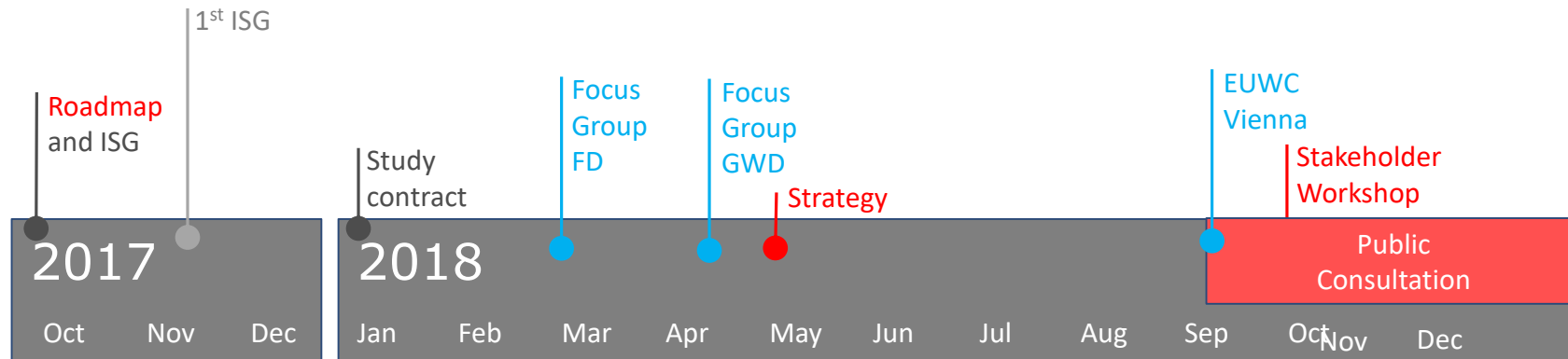
Key sources:

- Commission implementation reports and 2012 Fitness Check of the EU's freshwater policy ('Blueprint')
- Reports from the European Court of Auditors; CIS technical reports
- Studies and reports from Member States (including RBMPs and FRMPs)
- European Environment Agency reports; Joint Research Centre studies
- Statistical data (e.g. from European Environment Agency and Eurostat)
- EU-funded studies and research projects
- Academic papers
- Position papers from Member States and interest groups

Consultation:

- Public consultation (more than 375,000 replies, around 1950 individual replies)
- Stakeholders meetings
- Focus groups and interviews
- 100 position papers received

Timeline



Conclusions

The WFD and FD Directives
are ***broadly fit for purpose***

(with scope for improvements)

Conclusions (I)

For the WFD

- Results are mixed. 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 and **(3)** insufficient integration of environmental objectives in sectoral policies.

For the FD

- Too early to draw conclusions as first implementation cycle started only in 2016 but analysis shows flood risk management has improved.
- Further efforts needed to strengthen awareness and improve co-ordinated flood prevention, in line with climate change projections.

Conclusions (II)

Factors that contribute to effectiveness of WFD/EQSD/GWD in progressing towards their objectives:

- List of priority substances
- Cross-references in other EU policies
- EU funding
- Non-deterioration principle
- Monitoring requirements

Conclusions (III)

Factors that hinder better results for WFD/EQSD/GWD

- It proved more difficult than envisaged to establish the necessary governance framework, taking into account specific conditions in each Member State
- Good status depends not only on mitigation measures to address current pressures but needs also restoration measures for legacy from the past
- Good status critically depends on full implementation of other Directives (Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Nitrates Directive)
- Better policy coherence and integration into other policy areas are key (agriculture, energy, transport)
- Lack of financial resources - need for more investments

Overall appreciation of costs/benefits

- WFD: studies suggest benefits of measures outweigh costs; however, insufficient use is being made of principle of cost recovery, depriving Member States of source of revenue
- FD: studies show that cost/benefit ratio of flood protection measures is positive

Lessons learnt (I)

Progress towards good status remains slow but steady: results are slow, and the one-out-all-out principle can make showing progress challenging

The Directives are prescriptive and flexible to address new challenges:

Climate change
Emerging pollutants
Micro-plastics

Room for improvement in chemicals:

Many differences between Member States and River Basins
Lengthy process to update the list of priority substances
Mixtures and combined effects not assessed

Implementation needs to accelerate substantially and become more effective, including through enforcement. The 3rd RBMPs (due in 2021) will be crucial:

Less room for Art. 4 exemptions after 2027
Joint implementation effort: Cooperation between the Commission and Member States

Lessons learnt (II)

Further integration of the Directives with other policy areas needs to be advanced in a mutually supportive way (especially energy, agriculture, transport)

The financing gap (investment as well as operation and maintenance financing) needs to be addressed (national funding; EU funding; international financial institutions)

There is limited room for simplification and reduction of the Directives' administrative burden without jeopardising their objectives. Some further streamlining of monitoring and electronic reporting, together with a continuation of the ongoing digitalisation, could help alleviate the required administrative effort.

What's next?

- Green deal – many potential actions on water
 - Green Deal Investment Plan, Circular Economy Action Plan, Biodiversity 2030 Strategy, Farm to Fork (all first half 2020), Chemicals Strategy, ...
 - Zero Pollution air, water, soil (2021)
- Legislative follow up
 - Revise list of priority substances (WFD/EQSD); rest (if any) as yet undecided
 - Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive?
- Council debate March 2020