Implementing the Water Framework Directive: Implications for Regional Authorities. 4 June 2003, at the Steiermark Regional Office
Jointly organised by DG Environment and the Environment Platform of Regional Offices (EPRO)

DG Environment and EPRO are pleased to invite you to this jointly organised seminar. The purpose of this seminar is to raise awareness among the sub-national authorities that will play a role in implementation and to exchange experience and good practice.

Contents of this announcement:
- WFD In Context.
- Seminar Programme.
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European Water Policy

The Commission’s objectives under the Sixth Environmental Action Programme relating to water are:

‘for every citizen of the EU to have access to clean drinking water, safe bathing water and a health and sustainable aquatic environment’.

Recent policymaking has led to a revision of the Drinking Water Directive (1998) and in 2000; the Water Framework Directive (WFD) was adopted. This is intended to protect surface, ground, or coastal waters. It requires consideration of ecological as well as water quality criteria.

Implementing the Water Framework Directive

Implementing the Water Framework Directive raises a number of shared technical challenges for all stakeholders including:

- the European Commission
- Member States
- Accession Countries
- Regional and Local Authorities

Many European river basins cross national and administrative borders. A common understanding and approach to their management is crucial to the successful and effective implementation of WFD.

The Commission, the Member States and Norway have agreed on a Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) for the WFD so that challenges can be met in a coordinated way. It should be possible to put the directive into effect only five months after its entry into force. The activities of this strategy are:

- Information sharing
- Developing guidance on technical issues
- Information and data management
- Application, testing and validation.

Further information on this can be found on DG Environment’s website:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/index.html
Programme:

09:15 Registration and coffee
09:30 Welcome: Claudia Suppan, Deputy Head of Steiermark Regional Office, Rob Van Eijkeren, Coordinator of EPRO
10:00 Introduction to the Water Framework Directive Implementation Strategy: Prudencio Perera Manzanedo, Director DG Environment
11:30 Overview of the Situation on Pilot River Basins: Giovanni Bidoglio, JRC ISPRA
12:00 The Rhine, A Case Study: Henk Sterk, International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine
12:30 Networking Lunch, offered by Steiermarck Office
14:00 Workshop Introduction: Rob Van Eijkeren, Joachim D’Eugenio, DG ENV
14:30 Parallel Workshops:

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<td>Chaired by: Erik Mostert, RBA Centre, Delft University of Technology</td>
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15:30 Coffee Break
16:00 Plenary: Results of workshops. Chaired by Joachim D’Eugenio, DG ENV
16:45 Response from DG Environment: Patrick Murphy, DG ENV (to be confirmed)
16:55 Where do we go from here? Rob Van Eijkeren, EPRO Coordinator
17:30 Close

Directions to Steiermark Regional Office, 8 Place des Gueux

Schuman Metro Station
Public Participation

Public participation will play a key role in the implementation of the WFD. It is essential for making the directive a success. Moreover, the WFD states that "active involvement of all interested parties" should be encouraged and that consultations should be organised. Access background information should be provided to those that request it.

To support the implementation of the WFD, a guidance document on PP has been written under the CIS. Moreover, research on PP has started under the 5th RTD programme of EU.

During this workshop information will be provided on these initiatives. A number of key issues will be discussed:
- What is "active involvement" and what can authorities do to encourage it?
- At which scale(s) should PP be organised: local, regional, national, river basin level?
- How to reach the unorganised public?
- How to promote social learning?

Economic Analysis

The WFD requires the use economic analysis at different stages of its implementation. These requirements are mainly described in article 5 (characteristics of the river basin district, review of environmental impacts of human activity and economic analysis of water use), in annex III (economic analysis), and in article 9 (taking into account cost recovery for water services). However, other economic elements can be found in other parts of the directive’s text.

The main functions of the economic analysis include:
- to carry out an economic analysis of water uses (number, types, associated pressures and impacts) at the level of river basin districts
- to assess the current level of cost recovery
- to assess the trends (water supply and demand, investments) in a baseline scenario
- to help with designation of HMWB
- to support the selection of programmes of measures
- to assess the potential role of pricing in programmes of measures
- to estimate the potential need for derogation

Due to the timeframe and to the first feedback on experience of the Pilot River Basin activities, the workshop will mainly focus on 2004 economic requirements:
- How to achieve the economic characterisation of River Basin Districts?
- How to deal with data and scale issues?
- Which are the first steps in building a baseline scenario?
- How to treat the first requirement on current cost recovery?

Characterisation of the River Basin

Article 5 of the Water Framework Directive, states that an analysis of the characteristics of a river basin must be carried out by the end of 2004. Together with an analysis of pressures, impacts and economics, this work is crucial for the further implementation of the Directive since all the key requirements such as good water quality and measures will be related to that initial characterisation.

But what does characterisation involve? The aquatic environment in a river basin needs to be described, first in terms of typology and then by identifying water bodies, the geographical units to which all the objectives of the Directive will be related to. The typology categorises the waters according to their natural characteristics.

The implementation process is driven by technical and scientific considerations but it is important to note that classification of the ecological status, including setting reference conditions, can only be successful if the water types and the water bodies are assigned in a reliable and consistent way.

A particular category of concern is heavily modified and artificial water bodies. These are water bodies that have been created or heavily influenced by human activity. It may not be possible to remedy them sufficiently so that “good quality” status is achieved. A systematic procedure to select such water bodies has been identified in order to harmonise criteria for designation.

In summary, the characterisation of river basins is an essential first step for administrations to follow the process because it is an important basis for developing implementing measures. The involvement of regional authorities is therefore crucial and can add to the process since a lot of knowledge of the river basin characteristics is available on this level.
Participation Form

Please write clearly, and in capital letters:

Name: _________________________________________________________
Job Title: _________________________________________________________
Office Title: _________________________________________________________
Office Address: _________________________________________________________
Telephone: _________________________________________________________
Fax: _________________________________________________________
Email: _________________________________________________________

Select the workshop you wish to attend, in order of preference:

Public Participation □
Economic Analysis □
Characterisation of the River Basin □

We shall do our best to ensure you attend the workshop of your preference.

You are welcome to bring display materials and documentation that relates to your region’s work on water policy:

Yes I will bring display materials □

If you have not already registered to attend the seminar, please send this form back to:

c/o: Hampshire, Isle of Wight and West Sussex Office
Fax: +32.2.504.07.22
Or E-mail: info@hwws.southeastenglandhouse.net
**About EPRO…**

The Environment Platform of Regional Offices in Brussels was set up following an informal hearing organised by DG Environment’s Directorate B in October 2001 on how to put the Commission’s White Paper on Governance into effect.

EPRO’s aim is to maintain a good working relationship between Brussels-based regional offices and DG Environment.

One representative has been selected by his or her peers between the regional offices of each Member State. In many cases, an alternate has been selected. Each representative participates on a voluntary basis, and provides regular feedback on EPRO’s progress and opportunities to the rest of his or her national group. In 2003, EPRO invited regional representatives from the accession states to join the platform.

EPRO’s informal set up means it has no formal or political mandate. It is one of many focal points for the Commission, which can be used to disseminate information to a wide range of local and regional authorities and thereby facilitating participation of these authorities in the early stage of the EU policy making process.

EPRO does not seek to speak for the participating regions with one single voice but provides a useful channel through which the regions in Europe can express such diversity of opinion.

**Successes for 2001-2003**

Since EPRO’s set up, DG Environment has used the group to access expert knowledge from regional authorities from around Europe. The following people have been selected to represent EPRO on newly created Commission working groups:

- Biodiversity, David Gordon Dawson, London, UK
- NATURA 2000, Ellen Kray, Brandenburg, DE
- Costal erosion, Stéphane Costa, Normandie, F
- Soil protection, Roland Eichhorn, Bayern, DE
- Climate, environment and planning: Miguel Méndez Jiménez, Andalucía, E and Pirkko Hillevi Sein, Jyväskylä, FIN
- INSPIRE: Ole Gregor, Viborg, DK
- Groundwater: Giuseppe Bortone, Emilia Romagna, IT
- Soil Protection: Giosué Loj, Sardinia, IT

EPRO has agreed a transparent and accountable procedure for selecting experts to working groups, including taking account of the candidates’ experience working for regional and local government; qualifications and experience relevant to the subject matter of the particular working group in question; social, networking and language skills (knowledge of English being essential); and EU experience, particularly as concerns environment policy and participation in European projects and programmes.

The chosen expert works under clear terms of reference, concerning how they operate in the Commission working group. Each expert reports to, and is supported by, a shadow group of regional representatives and EPRO.

**Prospects for 2003**

As new initiatives are developed in DG Environment, EPRO hopes to have the chance to nominate experts to new working groups.

To raise awareness of upcoming environmental legislation and policies among regional offices and their contacts in the European regions, seminars such as the ‘Water Seminar’ will be organised throughout the year. We would welcome your views on suitable topics for discussion. Don’t hesitate to contact Rob Van Eijkeren with your ideas: (vaneijkeren@nl-prov.be)