

# WFD

## NEWSLETTER

1st Edition, September 2003



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Welcome to **Water Framework Directive Newsletter** presented by the European Commission's **Directorate General for the Environment**: a bimonthly newsletter for everyone interested in European water policy and in particular the process of implementation of the Water Framework Directive, or WFD.

*The aim of this newsletter is to bring you up to date with what is being done under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy, an outstanding joint strategy to improve, protect and enhance the quality of our rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters and groundwaters. Published several times a year, the WFD Newsletter will bring you news of what progress has been made and new issues arising from the process. By reading WFD Newsletter we hope it will not only inform you of what is going on, but inspire you to get involved and play your part in helping to deliver one of Europe's most ambitious pieces of environmental legislation to-date. WFD Newsletter will be available electronically free-of-charge through the WFD web-page of the Environment DG (see below).*

*In this first edition we outline the new organisational working structure under the Common Implementation Strategy (or CIS), as decided by the Water Directors in November 2002 (page 2). **The Pilot River Basins** (PRB) network is introduced, which will become a regular feature of this newsletter, as we examine the findings from several PRBs per edition. A special information sheet providing more information about the history and progress of the **Common Implementation Strategy** (CIS) to the end of 2002 is available separately on the WFD web-page (see below). Of course, we also provide you with updates of the key news on the WFD, upcoming events, meetings and workshops, and details on where to find more information. We hope you find this newsletter enjoyable and informative; in order for us to make this newsletter as useful as possible, please send any comments to the WFD Helpdesk.*

### The Water Framework Directive - **What is it?**

*In simple terms the Water Framework Directive (also known as the WFD or Directive 2000/60/EC) is a legislative framework to protect and improve the quality of all water resources such as rivers, lakes, groundwater, transitional and coastal water within the European Union. The WFD was published and entered into force in December 2000 (Official Journal of the European Communities, L327, 22 December 2000, pages 1-72). Member States must incorporate the WFD into national law by the end of 2003. Once this has taken place, many more steps must be taken to achieve "good status" of all European waters by 2015.*

*Some of the elements of the new and innovative approach to managing Europe's water resources in the WFD are:*

- *ambitious objectives and clear deadlines,*
- *the introduction of River Basin Management on a Europe-wide scale,*
- *the requirement for cross border co-operation in water management between countries and all involved parties,*
- *pollution prevention and control on the basis of the so called "combined approach"*
- *greater public participation in water management, and*
- *economic analysis of water use.*

*More information on the WFD, for example a leaflet and brochure, can be obtained from:*

**[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html)**

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## What is the **Common Implementation Strategy?**

The *Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive* (known as the CIS) was agreed by the European Commission, Member States and Norway in May 2001. The main aim of the CIS is to provide support in the implementation of the WFD, by developing a common understanding and guidance on key elements of this Directive. Experts from the above countries and candidate countries as well as stakeholders and non-governmental organisations are all involved in the CIS to:

- Raise awareness and exchange information;
- Develop guidance documents on various technical issues;
- Carry out integrated testing in pilot river basins; and
- Develop a European information management system

A series of working groups and joint activities help carry out the initiatives listed above. A Strategic Co-ordination Group (or SCG) oversees these working groups and reports directly to the Water Directors of the European Union, Norway, Switzerland, the Candidate Countries and Commissions, the “driving force” of the CIS.

For more information:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/implementation.html>

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## Feature: The Common Implementation Strategy Work Programme for 2003/04

Following an intensive work programme in 2001/2002, the list of results to date is impressive. Eleven guidance documents and four technical reports have been finalised to date. In addition, a pilot river basin network was established including 15 river basins involving 18 countries (see also next page). This marked the end of Phase 1 of the CIS' work. Since this is the first edition of WFD Newsletter, a special information sheet has been provided which provides more details on the “story so far”, including details of the previous CIS structure and outputs from the Working Groups (see internet address above).

Following the achievements of the 2001/2002 Work Programme, it was necessary to review the priorities and organisational structure of the CIS to ensure that work could continue successfully. Consequently, the Water Directors agreed in their meeting on 21/22 November 2002 in Copenhagen, to set out a clear list of priority tasks and to re-organise the Working Groups to complete these tasks in the most effective way. The following priorities are identified in the 2003/2004 Work Programme:

- Integrated testing in pilot river basins;
- Further development of the intercalibration exercise;
- Development of additional guidance documents on specific issues (e.g. wetlands, classification and economic aspects);
- Maintaining and extending the network of experts and increasing information exchange and raising awareness.

The new focus has led to the review and a reduction of the number of working groups into four new key groups:

- ‘Ecological Status’ (Working Group 2.A or ECOSTAT)
- ‘Integrated River Basin Management’ (Working Group 2.B or IRBM)
- ‘Groundwater’ (Working Group 2.C)
- ‘Reporting’ (Working Group 2.D)

In addition, the work of the Expert Advisory Forum (EAF) on Priority Substances will continue and the Committee required by Article 21 of the Directive will be established. The EAF on Groundwater will terminate its work after the finalisation of the Commission proposal for a Groundwater Directive. The new Working Group 2.C will continue work from the Autumn of 2003 by starting with a workshop on groundwater characterisation. The EAF on Reporting has been transformed into the Working Group 2.D.

The details of the new work programme and organisation were agreed by the Water Directors on 17 June 2003 in Athens. Some amendments to the Work Programme and mandates for the Working Groups were agreed. Once these have been incorporated, the documents will be made available on the public area of WFD CIRCA (see last page for more information).

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# water



## The Pilot River Basin Network: **An Introduction**

The main output of the 2001/2002 CIS Work Programme was a series of guidance documents for the implementation of the WFD. In order to test and cross validate these guidance documents, a network of pilot river basins has been established. Several countries have proposed river basins within their territory of transboundary river basins to participate in this voluntary exercise.

Pilot river basins and associated coastal zones representative of the ranges of climatic, technical and political conditions have been proposed by Member States. Participants in the network include the lead countries for the different guidance documents and participants from the local and regional water management administrations in the pilot river basins, including NGOs and stakeholders.

The pilot river testing begins in 2003 and should be finalised by the end of 2004. In addition, separate initiatives, activities or events (such as workshops) will take place involving the leaders and participants of the pilot river basins. Feedback from the network will be used to improve guidance, and to produce a manual for the practical implementation of the WFD.

The Strategic Co-ordination Group will lead the Pilot River Basins jointly with the Member States and Institutions in the selected pilot river basins. The Institute for Environment and Sustainability at the Joint Research Centre (JRC-IES) will act as the technical Secretariat to ensure: (i) the practical day to day functioning of the project, information exchange, and support activities, (ii) that identified tasks carried out by the different groups involved are feasible and coherent with the objectives of the project, (iii) that the selected pilot river basins have comparable technical support to carry out their duties, and (iv) to assure that efficient inter-comparison analysis between those studies is carried out. JRC will also report progress to the new Working Group 2.B for Integrated River Basin Management.

For more information see:

[http://viso.ei.jrc.it/wfd\\_prb/index.html](http://viso.ei.jrc.it/wfd_prb/index.html)

**Fifteen Pilot River Basins have been proposed to date:**

<b>Scheldt transboundary river basin</b>	(Belgium, France, The Netherlands)
<b>Odense river basin</b>	(Denmark)
<b>Oulujoki river basin</b>	(Finland)
<b>Moselle-Sarre transboundary river basin</b>	(France, Germany, Luxembourg)
<b>Marne river basin</b>	(France)
<b>Neisse transboundary river basin</b>	(Germany, Poland, and Czech Republic)
<b>Pinios river basin</b>	(Greece)
<b>Shannon river basin</b>	(Ireland)
<b>Ribble river basin</b>	(UK, England)
<b>Cecina and Tevere river basin</b>	(Italy)
<b>Sulda Isvassdraget river basin</b>	(Norway)
<b>Guadiana river basin (Portuguese part)</b>	(Portugal)
<b>Samos transboundary river basin</b>	(Romania, Hungary)
<b>Júcar river basin</b>	(Spain)



In future editions of the WFD Newsletter the pilot river basins will be presented in more detail. We will start by introducing the Odense and the Moselle-Sarre.

## Latest news in related policy areas - **Proposal for Groundwater Directive**

The European Commission adopted a proposal for a new Directive to protect groundwater from pollution on the 19 September 2003. The proposed Directive ensures a common approach in the European Union to assessing the chemical status of groundwater and to identifying and reversing upward trends in groundwater pollution. It fulfils an obligation placed on the Commission under Article 17 of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), which aims to ensure good status of all waters in the EU and asked for groundwater to be separately tackled in a Daughter Directive.

Margot Wallström, the Commissioner for the Environment, said: "Groundwater is a very important natural resource on which we greatly depend and which we must safeguard. The proposed Directive will help us find out more and make sure that our groundwater is not being polluted. It will ensure a high level of protection based on a common approach, while still leaving a considerable degree of flexibility to the Member States on how to achieve the environmental objectives."

The proposal will now be discussed in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers before it is finally adopted. It is estimated that this process of co-decision will be concluded in late 2004 or the beginning of 2005.

The Commission proposal can be found on the EUR-Lex homepage under: <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>

## Upcoming meetings

(PRB: pilot river basins, EAF: Expert Advisory Forum)

<b>PRB Workshop on Surface Water Bodies</b>	25-26 September 2003	Brussels
<b>EAF Priority Substances</b>	17-18 November 2003	Brussels
<b>PRB Workshop on Economics</b>	9-10 October 2003	Paris
<b>PRB Workshop on Groundwater</b>	13 October 2003	Brussels
<b>Working Group 2D Reporting</b>	15 October 2003	Brussels
<b>Working Group 2A Ecological Status</b>	16-17 October 2003	Ispra
<b>Strategic Co-ordination Group</b>	27-28 October 2003	Brussels

\* Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are by invitation only

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What is WFD CIRCA?

CIRCA stands for "Communication Information Resource Centre Administrator" and it is a software tool, developed under the European Commission IDA programme, which is tuned towards Public Administrations' needs. The WFD CIRCA Interest Group "Implementing the Water Framework Directive" is the main tool for exchanging information under the Common Implementation Strategy of the Water Framework Directive. Initially, it was set up to facilitate the work of the different groups under the strategy. However, due to the increasing interest in the work, it was decided to open the WFD CIRCA to wider access.

For further information please see: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/information.html>

Currently, there are over 750 members of the WFD CIRCA but there is also a part that is accessible without a password. In this public part you will find a library of useful documents, including the final guidance documents and technical reports.

The public library is directly accessible through: <http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd.library>

In case you have any questions or problems using WFD CIRCA, please contact the Helpdesk under: [env-wfd-circa@cec.eu.int](mailto:env-wfd-circa@cec.eu.int)

### Where can I find out more information?

A number of websites provide further information:

The DG Environment's WFD pages:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html)

The Joint Research Centre:

Intercalibration: <http://ies.jrc.cec.eu.int/eemail>

Pilot river basin: [http://viso.ei.jrc.it/wfd\\_prb/index.html](http://viso.ei.jrc.it/wfd_prb/index.html)

The CIRCA WFD library: <http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/library>

## Key people in the WFD: the DG Environment WFD Team

This section will present some people or groups working on the EU Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive. In this first edition of the WFD Newsletter, we introduce the WFD Team of the European Commission. In future editions, we will present the team working in the Joint Research Centre, the Water Directors, the Strategic Co-ordination Group and the different Working Groups in the CIS process.

The WFD team is the staff within the DG Environment's Water Unit of the European Commission who are dealing with the implementation of this Directive. Their remit is to ensure that the CIS Work Programme is completed satisfactorily and that the requirements of the WFD are being met. The team prepares future legislation such as for groundwater and priority substances, organises the Article 21 Committee, the SCG and the Water Directors' meetings and participates in the various working groups.

The WFD team consists of (from left to right on the picture) Maria Brüttemark, Ingrid Pesce, Marta Moren Abat, Joachim D'Engenio, Michel Boucneau (who left in July 2003), Philippe Quevaullier and Thierry Davy (missing on the picture). In addition, there are several other colleagues who support the WFD Team on specific issues.

You can contact the WFD Team by e-mailing the WFD helpdesk ([env-wfd-circa@cec.eu.int](mailto:env-wfd-circa@cec.eu.int)).



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