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## Water Scarcity and Drought

**Last updated in April 2010**

### Latest Developments

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) Announced the 2010 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate on World Water Day. Dr Rita Colwell, distinguished Professor from the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins, has been named the 2010 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate. Dr Colwell has shown how changes in climate, adverse weather events, shifts in ocean circulation and other ecological processes can create conditions that allow infectious diseases to spread, and through that link she has led the ability to craft preemptive policies to minimise outbreaks.

In addition, SIWI has announced that it will organise its World Water Week in Stockholm in September. This event will mark the 20th Anniversary of the event. The Stockholm International Water Institute is currently putting together the programme for the week in consultation with our co-convening organisations.

[SIWI website](#)  
[World Water Week 2010](#)

### Impact for golf management

- Irrigation
- Water management – opportunity for EGA GCC members to engage in dialogue during establishment of River Basin Management Plans

### Background

#### **Last Updated in February 2010:**

Only eight countries (the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the UK) have submitted their plans. Most of the others are completing consultations while the process has not yet started in Denmark, Greece and Portugal.

The Commission is due to report in March on the plans, including programmes of measures to improve the water environment. Under guidance issued recently by the commission, the plans will have to incorporate adaptation to climate change from 2015.

[Country-by-country information on plans](#)

The European Commission has issued guidance on how to integrate climate change adaptation



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into water management policies.

The Commission says Member States should take into account the impacts of climate change on water bodies in their river basin management plans from 2015. The guidance is one of several measures announced in the Commission's adaptation paper.

#### [Water Framework Directive Guidance](#)

In a recent study, Spanish researchers investigated the quality of Basque coastal and estuarine waters in northern Spain. The study focused on the long-term trend (from 1995-2007) of water and sediment contamination by metal pollutants (arsenic, cadmium, copper, chromium, mercury, nickel, lead and zinc) and the response of these areas to water treatment programmes.

In addition, the chemical status of these water bodies was assessed using two approaches: (1) following the principle of "one out, all out" under the WFD, whereby any metal in waters over the EQS will result in the whole station failing to achieve the chemical status (and for concentrations below the EQS, the chemical status is met), and (2) Combining the chemical quality of both the surface waters and the underlying sediment, using a methodology proposed by these researchers.

#### [Sediment study press release](#)

In November, a European Commission-sponsored report on the Portuguese government's national dams programme concludes that building the ten projected dams would put Portugal in breach of the EU's water framework directive.

According to SIC, the report says failures in the way environmental impact assessments were carried out on some of the dams mean Portugal may be sanctioned for non-compliance with the EU water law. This makes the government's decision to press ahead with the dams "incomprehensible".

#### **Last Updated in October 2009:**

##### ***River Basin Plans***

On 22 September, the Anglo-Welsh Environment Agency announced that 31% of rivers in England and Wales are expected to meet the EU objective on water quality set in the EU water framework directive. The directive's objective to improve water quality by 2015 is only met by 25% of rivers at the moment. Statistics released by the environment agency show that only five of the 6,000 rivers in England and Wales are in pristine condition, while 117 are rated as amongst the dirtiest in Europe.

The Water Framework Directive requires Member States to adopt river basin management plans by the end of this year. Green groups the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) have said [draft plans issued so far across Europe are inadequate](#), providing few mechanisms and little funding to achieve the EU water quality goal.

According to the European Commission, Italy, Greece, Denmark and Portugal have not yet begun consultations on their national plans. Consultations in Romania, Sweden, Estonia, Hungary and Austria are still ongoing. This is a good opportunity for EGA GCC members to engage and convey their priorities in the field of water management. The draft plans for England and Wales outline steps to clean up 11 river basin areas, including key



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recommendations for agriculture, industry, mining, local government, transport, anglers and the water industry.

[Quality of Rivers in England and Wales best for over a century](#)

[Draft plans for river basins in England and Wales](#)

[Commission's webpage on national consultations](#)

On 29 September, head of the water unit in the European Commission's environment directorate, Peter Gammeltoft, stated that all EU member states need to put in place a "wide interpretation of water pricing provisions" to ensure full compliance with the water framework directive (WFD) by the end of the year.

The WFD requires policies that "provide adequate incentives for users to use water resources efficiently" by 2010. Some argue [the law's full cost recovery principle](#) should simply refer to the cost of providing water. But the concept "must apply to everything because the WFD applies to all uses and all impacts," Mr Gammeltoft added.

Moreover, Dominique Gatel of water industry lobby group EUREAU added that the agricultural sector is a big contributor to water pollution and a large user of water for irrigation, being a major part of the water problem. It is unlikely huge progress will be made quickly but things are bound to improve now that water pricing is fully transparent.

Mr. Gammeltoft accepted that river basin management plans currently being drafted under the WFD would not take full account of climate change, as the information available is still scarce.

EU guidance documents on climate change and water are being prepared for adoption by heads of national water departments on 1 December. A meeting between Member States and the Commission will take place in Paris in October.

On 7 October, a recent [report](#) released by the Czech statistical office reveals that the Czech Republic's wastewater treatment remains inadequate despite attracting more than a third of total investment in environmental protection in 2008. According to figures from the report, out of €793m spent on environmental protection in 2008, €295m went towards end-of-pipe solutions in the wastewater treatment sector.

The Czech auditing office stated that the country will not meet the requirements of the EU's urban wastewater treatment directive by the December 2010 deadline. Moreover, they found that the European Commission requirements on the use of EU funds were ignored. As a result, future EU funding for wastewater treatment may decrease by as much as 20%.

After wastewater treatment, waste management was the next biggest recipient of environment-related investment in the Czech Republic in 2008 at €160m.

[Czech Republic press release on waste water](#)

[Czech Statistical office](#)

On 8 September, the UK environment department, Defra, published the river water quality indicator. It is one of the 68 indicators of the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy. It separately measures biological and chemical river water quality on an annual basis.

[Water Quality indicator for sustainable development 2008](#)



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Also in September, a report was published by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency that describes how treatment of wastewater from urban areas has evolved in Sweden.

[Waste Water treatment in Sweden Report](#)

### ***Initiatives***

On 21 September, a [report](#) published by the national observatory on the effects of global warming.

The [ONERC](#) predicts a shortfall of two billion m<sup>3</sup>/year, or 14% of existing demand (agriculture, industry and drinking water). Climatic and environment problems such as the 2003 heat waves could cost the wheat sector up to €300m per year by 2010, according to the report. In addition, the report states that the sea level rise could cost the road sector around €2bn. Climate-induced coastal erosion in Languedoc-Roussillon alone could cost the southwestern region several billion euros. Moreover, the ONERC also predicted possible impacts in areas including biodiversity and tourism. The report also suggests climate adaptation measures to mitigate the predicted impacts, calling for measures to further reduce water consumption in the agricultural sector, and for integrating biodiversity into climate policies.

### ***Regions***

On 25 August, Michèle Sabban, the president of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) during a conference of regional leaders in Valencia, said that Brussels needs to set a clear budget for taking on the 'blue challenge'. Ms. Sabban added that water issues need to be higher up the European agenda.

Regional leaders in Europe agreed that more needs to be done to tackle the water crisis facing Europe. Regions have a central role in developing water policy and raising awareness to citizens.

Ms. Sabban added that, "the politicians will have some decisions to make and a budget to consider so it's really important to have regional cooperation. I also intend to bring this declaration to the president of the EU Commission, I will meet with him to try and bring the message to an EU level."

In addition, Ms. Sabban spoke of a forum she is organizing in the Black Sea. Participants will include delegates from Russia, Romania and Turkey. "It's very important that we talk about water with those regions," she said. "The Black Sea can really play a very important role in the water crisis".

[Article of Michele Sabban on water](#)

The Spanish region of Valencia is lobbying for the EU to develop a policy to promote the "intelligent" use of water using the renewable energy model, as world consumption of water will triple in the next ten years.

In Albufera, south of Valencia, the region is often hit by drought and has a long tradition of dealing with water scarcity. Spain's rice fields are located in this area and there is only one source of irrigation for these crops. A sewage water treatment plant worth €15 million was 80 percent financed by the EU's regional development fund and is expected to last until 2025.



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Intelligent irrigation systems and the re-use of rain and waste water are just some examples of what the local university and research centres are developing and implementing in the region. Mr Revuelta, Valencia's representative in Brussels, said that he was pleased to see 15 concrete projects sealed between various European regions and aimed at tapping EU funds. Malta and Valencia are participating in the project, but some other non-EU members, such as Jordan, also expressed their interest.

#### ***European Parliament Questions***

On 10 September, Greek Socialist MEP, Kriton Arsenis, asked the Commission a few question in regards to a large-scale investment project which is under way in western Messinia (Greece). This project includes the construction of hotels and golf courses in a Special Protection Area (SPA) of the Natura 2000 Network, the 'Lagoon of Yalova in Pylos and the island of Sfaktiria'.

Mr. Arsenis specifically mentions one project which consists of drawing off water to provide a water supply for the golf facilities. This project is likely to have a direct impact on the flow of water towards the lagoon. Mr. Arsenis asked the Commission if the plan is compatible with Community legislation. He would like to know if environment conditions should be approved before a management plan has been authorized and appropriate measures taken.

Moreover, he asked if the Greek Government taken the necessary institutional measures required by Community legislation for the region in question, and what view does the Commission have on the environmental impact of golf courses in areas that are in risk of desertification. We will monitor the Commission reply on this.

In addition, Polish Conservative MEP Danuta Hubner, chairwoman of the regional development committee, says water will be a "major priority" of EU regional policy. "There are regions that will require specific responses, which will be more affected than others by droughts, floods or water scarcity," she said. "That is why, more than ever, the European regional policy 2007-2013 will be ambitious in its environmental initiatives at local and regional level."

#### **Previous Updates:**

The European Union Water Framework Directive was heavily criticized by Marleen van Rijswick, professor of environmental law at the University of Utrecht, during the Academy of European Law Annual Conference on European Water Management Law. According to Mrs van Rijswick, the Framework Directive foresees numerous exemptions which postpone achieving 'good water status' at the very earliest until 2037 and lack obligations of results. These criticisms come as the Member States of the European Union are in the process of establishing River Basin Management Plans by the end of 2009 in order to ensure good water status in a given geographical area by 2015.

From 16 to 22 March 2009 **The 5th World Water Forum**, the world's largest water-related event, was held in Istanbul, Turkey. The Forum is organized every three years as a joint venture between the World Water Council and the government of the host country. The United Nations representatives at the Fifth World Water Forum introduced the third report on the development of the global water management - "Water in a Changing World". This report gives an overview of the state of water sources and instruments for their sustainable exploitation as well as recommendation to politicians and shows that the importance of water was and still is considerably underestimated both financially and politically despite the fact that water is an important natural resource used daily in all spheres. A Delegation of 5 MEPs of the



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Environment and Development Committees of Parliament participated in the 5th World Water Forum.

The main priorities of the European Union in the area of water management, which the EU will continue to promote beyond the current World Water Forum, are as follows:

1. Cooperation among other sectors that depend on water (energy, economy, agriculture, education, healthcare, forestry, industry)
2. Sustainable consumption, access to safe water and sanitation
3. Water-saving measures in all sectors
4. Sustainable and integrated management of water resources
5. Adaptation to climate changes which have an impact above all on the quantity, but also the quality of water
6. Cross-border cooperation in water management, which is also the principal theme of this year's World Water Day
7. Water as a theme for high-level political discussions, including the provision of adequate funding and good management of the whole process in order to achieve international objectives (Millennium Development Goals)
8. Putting water on the agenda of the 17th meeting of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development and the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen which will take place in December 2009.

On 1 April 2009 the European Commission published the COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT **Climate Change and Water, Coasts and Marine Issues**, accompanying the WHITE PAPER "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action". This document emphasizes the impact climate change will have on water scarcity throughout the EU and the steps that need to be taken in terms of adaptation and sustainable water management.

Some key quotes below:

"Over the coming decades, climate change will have a significant impact on the quantity and quality of water resources both within Europe and globally. Water is essential to life and is central to society's welfare and to sustainable economic growth. Plants, animals, natural and managed ecosystems, and human settlements are sensitive to variations in the storage, fluxes, and quality of water and will be affected by climate change.

Climate change is projected to lead to major changes in water availability across Europe with increasing water scarcity mainly in southern Europe and increasing risk of floods throughout most of the continent. At least 11% of the European population and 17% of its territory have been affected by water scarcity to date. Recent trends show a significant increase in water scarcity across Europe.

These anticipated changes to water quantity and quality will have a wide impact, and will significantly affect key socio-economic activities across a range of sectors. Biodiversity and ecosystems in large parts of Europe will also be affected."

Link to the COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT **Climate Change and Water, Coasts and Marine Issues**, accompanying the WHITE PAPER Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action:



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[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/pdf/com\\_2009\\_147\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/pdf/com_2009_147_en.pdf)

On the 2nd and 3rd of April 2009 **The European Water Conference 2009** was held in Brussels, aiming at encouraging the active involvement of citizens and stakeholders and to draw maximum attention to the preparations of the River Basin Management Plans. The successful development and implementation of River Basin Management Plan is key to European water policy and offers the opportunity to take important decisions on water management for the future. The Water Framework Directive gives interested parties and the public the right to be involved and consulted in order to ensure the best decisions are taken. Article 14 of the Water Framework Directive requires Member States to actively involve interested parties in the consultations on draft River Basin Management Plans and to make these drafts available for comments in writing from the public during a 6 month period – starting at the latest 22.12.2008. The European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas delivered a speech during the conference.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) debated water ahead of World Water Day and the 5th World Water Forum and mentioned the golfing industry as one of the key contributors in exacerbating the problem of water scarcity throughout the EU. In particular, MEPs considered that:

There are fierce controversies over what many consider to be the "misuse" of water, for example "watering roses or a golf course." In Spain, where golf tourism is well developed the **annual water needed for all the golf courses** was recently calculated as being **equivalent to the needs of a city of 12,000 inhabitants.**"

On 2 April 2009 Friends of Europe organized a **debate on "DOES EUROPE HAVE A GLOBAL VISION FOR TACKLING WATER SCARCITY"**.

The debate featured:

Anders Berntell, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

Peter Borkey, Water Team Manager for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Antoine Frerot, CEO of Veolia Water and Author of Water- For a culture of responsibility

Peter Gammeloft, Acting Director of Water, Chemicals and Cohesion, European Commission Directorate General for the Environment

Moderated by Gilles Merritt, Secretary General of Friends of Europe

The focus of the conference was the essential link between water and development and the role the EU can play on a global scale in creating an effective system of governance and legal framework to ensure that the proportion of people without access to drinking water and sanitation is reduced. The repeated failure to achieve targets set through the Millennium Development Goals was emphasized and the Water Framework Directive was identified as the cornerstone of Europe's legislation on water which although is an excellent tool for tackling water scarcity regionally, lacks a global vision. Food production was named as the main cause of water scarcity and food consumption as the main contributor to each individual's water



footprint.

The OECD representative stated that with regards to water the main issue isn't scarcity but the lack of an efficient management system, that the water sector is under funded and that an important effort needs to be done through national taxes and tariffs in order to close this financing gap.

Another recurring issue was the limited attention that water receives within the EU policy framework and the unwillingness of international negotiators to stress the fundamental importance of water in the context of climate change and mitigation in particular. Moreover, the huge water inefficiencies due to the utilization of old technologies and the absence of the appropriate infrastructure, particularly in irrigation systems throughout Europe, were areas of concern.

During Q&A session a member of the Coca Cola Company intervened stressing the water sustainability initiatives that several corporations are increasingly undertaking and enquiring as to whether the European Commission intends to provide incentives in order to encourage such actions. The value of such corporate initiatives was recognized by all the participants who stated that incentives to support such efforts are essential and that a network for action which incorporates all stakeholders (i.e. corporations, NGOs and governments) and identifies their respective responsibilities and rights is the only way to provide a systematic and long-term solution to water scarcity. The role of industry in providing solutions and increasing public awareness was deemed invaluable and the setting of less distorted prices, where the real value of water is reflected was identified as the key long-term objective.

A special **Eurobarometer survey on Europeans' opinion on water issues** published by the European Commission on 21-22 March 2009 indicated that almost two out of three Europeans consider that the quality and quantity of available water in their country is a serious problem. Concern about the quantity of water is greatest in Cyprus where 97% of Cypriots feel water quantity is a serious problem compared to 63% of Europeans on average. Least concerned are the Finns with 23%. Chemical pollution (75%) and climate (50%) are perceived by Europeans as the main threats to water resources in their country. As many as 85% think climate change would have some impact on water resources in Europe. Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "Without enough good quality water our economies and societies can neither thrive nor survive. Europeans realise the seriousness of the issue and they understand that action is needed to maintain clean and sufficient water resources for the survival of our society. Member States must swiftly take steps to fully implement all EU legislation on water."

#### Links

Link to article on the Academy of European Law Annual Conference on European Water Management Law

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/environment/doubts-cast-eu-water-directive/article-181667>

Link to WWF EEB River Management Plans Press Release

[http://www.eeb.org/press/2009/090529\\_%20PR\\_EU\\_water\\_analysis\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.eeb.org/press/2009/090529_%20PR_EU_water_analysis_FINAL.pdf)

[Water policy in the European Union](#)

[The European Environment Commissioner Stavos Dimas presented the new European](#)



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Commission strategy to fight water scarcity and droughts

Link to the The 5th World Water Forum

<http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/>

Link to the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Water Conference in Brussels 2-3 April 2009

[http://www.ewc2009.eu/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=31](http://www.ewc2009.eu/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=31)

Link to the speech of European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas during the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Water Conference

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/09/170&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Link to EP Article:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story\\_page/064-4911-100-04-15-911-20070329STO04903-2007-10-04-2007/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/064-4911-100-04-15-911-20070329STO04903-2007-10-04-2007/default_en.htm)

Link to the results of the Eurobarometer survey:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/participation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/participation/index_en.htm)