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THE EUROPEAN GOLF ASSOCIATION GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

EU WATER DIRECTIVES FACT SHEET

The Directive

Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC

This is a major piece of legislation that aims to improve the ecology and chemical quality of our inland and coastal waters by 2015. The Directive promotes sustainable use of water and enhances water protection through progressive reduction of emissions. It is, in part, an anti-pollution Directive but it also relates to water availability and national governments are drawing up River Basin Management Plans to produce a cohesive strategy through which to implement the Directive. The Directive, adopted in 2000, provides for a number of deadlines by which Member States have to fulfill particular obligations and report the achievement to the European Commission. The Water Framework Directive has the following key aims:

- To expand the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater
- To achieve "good status" for all waters by a set deadline
- For water management to be based on river basins
- To produce a "combined approach" of emission limit values and quality standards
- To get water pricing right
- To get the citizen involved more closely
- To streamline legislation

In addition to the WFD, water scarcity and drought is now under consideration with a goal to further develop this for 2012. In this context, the Commission published in July 2007 a Communication on water scarcity and drought identifying three options of how to deal with this issue:

- Water "pricing". The need to set up a "user pays" principle, i.e. the consumer of water will have to pay its real cost.
- Water "saving". The EU must learn to manage its water supply, with approximately 20% currently wasted within the EU.
- An increase in water supply, though this is only to be considered when both other options have been fully considered.

The European Commission note that there is a need to integrate water concern in water intensive industry and society - as has been done previously for climate change and energy supply. On 8 April 2008, in a European Parliament Environment Committee debate on the Commission's Communication, MEPs asked that closer attention be given to other sectors such as agriculture and tourism rather than household consumption. There was general agreement among the MEPs present to take a closer look to the implementation of the Directive at a Member State level and the local practices regarding water and territory management.

Key issues

Pollution. Water availability. Water quality. The cost of water. Drought.

Impact on golf

The Water Framework Directive will have a notable impact on all land managers and this will be bolstered by any development on water scarcity and drought. Golf courses will have to take even greater care to prevent pollution incidents, from pesticide and fertiliser applications, machinery wash-down areas and other potential sources of pollution. They will have to comply with River Basin Management Plans with regard to abstraction for irrigation.

The EGA GCC position

The Committee promotes a natural approach to golf course management and believes that lush, green coloured turf does not produce the best playing surfaces. The desired effect is produced through minimal use of irrigation water and the implementation of best practice, e.g. correct grass selection, efficient irrigation practices to ensure even penetration of water applied, the use of other maintenance practices to make the most of any water applied and correct water scheduling and auditing. Encourage the use of non-potable sources of water for irrigation, e.g. rain water harvesting, winter abstraction and recycled water. Promote investment in mechanisms to prevent the risk of pollution incidents. Recommend that courses keep accurate and detailed records of water use, preferably by using The R&A's free and anonymous benchmarking service at bestcourseforgolf.org

More information on means of minimising water use and reducing pollution risk is available at www.bestcourseforgolf.org

Recommended action

The European Golf Association Golf Course Committee (EGA GCC) will keep you informed of developments at the EU.

The Water Framework Directive is already being implemented and some national governments have their own legislation in place which addresses issues covered by the EU. However, it is still vitally important for golf to engage with national government, and we recommend that this is done on a collective basis as demonstrated by the members of the EGA GCC.

Monitor the impact of this Directive and advise interested parties in your own country as to the legislation and its likely impact on their courses.

Work with national and local government on the River Basin Management Plans to protect the game from overly stringent legislation. Build up a profile of water use on golf courses in your country, preferably by promoting the use of the free and anonymous benchmarking service on The R&A bestcourseforgolf.org website, to ensure that engagement is based on a solid base of knowledge.

