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**EU WATER**  
**CONFERENCE**  
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#EUWater2018



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Austrian  
Presidency  
of the  
Council of the  
European Union

# EurEau's perspective on Europe's waters today

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# EurEau - Who we are

- European Federation of **Water Services**
- 32 National Associations of **drinking water and waste water** operators from 29 European countries
- Both **public and private** sector
- 500,000 direct jobs



of the European population are connected to waste water services



# Europe's waters today



- Success of EU water policy to protect aquatic environment
- UWWTD (1991): substantially reduced pollution from households
- EEA European Waters Report (2018):
  - **Point sources** represent only **18 %** of pressures  
=> 38% diffuse sources
  - **40% of surface waters** in good ecological status  
=> **little change** since first cycle
  - **38%** bodies with good chemical status  
=> **97%** if ubiquitous priority substances (mercury) not taken into account

There are  
**3 million**  
kilometres of sewers, which would get you to  
the Moon almost 8 times!



# UWWTD



- UWWTD implementation report (2017):
  - *“More than 25 years after the adoption of the UWWTD, significant progress towards full implementation was achieved by 2014. This has led to gradual but significant improvement in the quality of European waters”.*
- New challenges:
  - Sewage sludge quality
  - Micropollutants (pharmaceutical residues, microplastics, etc.)
  - Better collection of waste water by rehabilitation of existing sewers
- Opportunities
  - Circular economy (e.g. water reuse, nutrients recovery, energy recovery/generation)
- European Commission evaluation ongoing



# Source control is essential

EU legislation built on:

- precautionary principle
- control at source principle
- polluter-pays principle.







# Source control is essential

- **Positive:** Commission proposal on Single Use Plastics regarding wet wipes (labelling, awareness raising, EPR?)
- **Pending:** EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment
- **Pending:** EU strategy «towards a non-toxic environment»
- **Source control:** essential prerequisite for circular economy for water.



# Water resources protection



- Greater EU Policy coordination is key:
  - Between WFD and 'water industry' directives
    - UWWTD, DWD, BWD
  - Between WFD and sectoral policies: water policy objectives should be mainstreamed in other policy areas such as:
    - CAP
    - Nitrate Directive
    - Plant Protection Product Regulations
    - Biocides Regulation
    - REACH
    - Climate policy
    - Energy policy





# Drinking water resources



- Art.7.3 of the WFD:

*Protection for the bodies of water identified for the abstraction of water for human consumption or intended for such future use, with the aim of avoiding deterioration in their quality in order to reduce the level of purification treatment required in the production of drinking water.*

- No results: water operators are obliged to increase treatment ➡ consumers' bills increase ➡ **affordability concerns!**
- Old example: Agriculture pressure - Intensive use of nitrate and pesticides
- New example: DWD proposal on PFASs: source control (restrictions, bans)



# WFD: 2027 outlook



- Objectives and ambition of the WFD should be maintained
- Most progress is hidden: Change the approach of communicating progress towards the achievement of 'good status'
- Climate change will have an impact on the possibility of reaching the reference conditions.
- The lack of a holistic approach to water pollution has increasingly led to end-of-pipe solutions rather than 'source control' measures



# WFD: 2027 outlook



- Policy coordination between the WFD and other relevant European legislation is fundamental to deliver the WFD goals.
- Improving water quality should be considered as a continuous process: it is important to maintain the current level of ambition for the protection of water resources.
- For these reasons, an extension of the deadline beyond 2027 should be considered.







**THANK YOU!**