



'Crunch time for Europe's water'

EEB Conference

November 18 2008, Brussels, Belgium

First Announcement

Conference background

It is high time for a new approach to water management in Europe. After 8 years of intensive preparatory work Member States will have to present their draft River Basin Management Plans by the end of 2008.

These plans are supposed to establish the main water protection objectives for the next 20 years. They should propose measures to address the most pressing challenges facing water management in Europe today: limited space and water availability for functioning aquatic ecosystems – which can effectively maintain life-sustaining services in times of environmental and climate change.

Governments will have to leave well-trodden paths in order to tackle diffuse pollution from farming and newly recognised problems of too many dammed and over-engineered rivers as well as increasing levels of consumption of scarce water resources.

The River Basin Management Plans will have to cover new ground to meet the challenge: fostering public ownership, applying environmental economics and using integrated ecosystem assessments are some of the necessary ingredients for success.

In order to assess whether governments are performing and whether their draft plans will rise to the challenges, EEB in cooperation with WWF, developed a set of headline indicators. Those will serve as the basis for an in-depth assessment during the following 6 months.

On November 18, these headline indicators will be officially launched and discussed with policy makers and key stakeholders.

Preliminary Agenda

Conference Chair: John Hontelez, EEB Secretary General

Morning session 9.30 – 13.00

- Key note speech on challenges in water management
- Presentation and discussion of a set of indicators to assess quality of draft River Basin Management Plans

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch break

Afternoon session 14.00 – 17.00

Showcasing best practice in addressing key challenges

- Ownership and transparency
- Reducing water wastage:
- More space for rivers
- Healthy and safe water for people and nature
- Vision and learning from past errors

Conference conclusions 17.00 by conference chair

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