



Ministry of Infrastructure and the
Environment

Agriculture, part of the problem or part of the solution for water issues?

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Content

- Alignment of EU policies – what is the problem?
 - Nutrients
 - Pesticides
 - Abstraction/drought
- Water and agriculture during Dutch Presidency (1st half of 2016)
- Way forwards: boundary conditions for a further cooperation



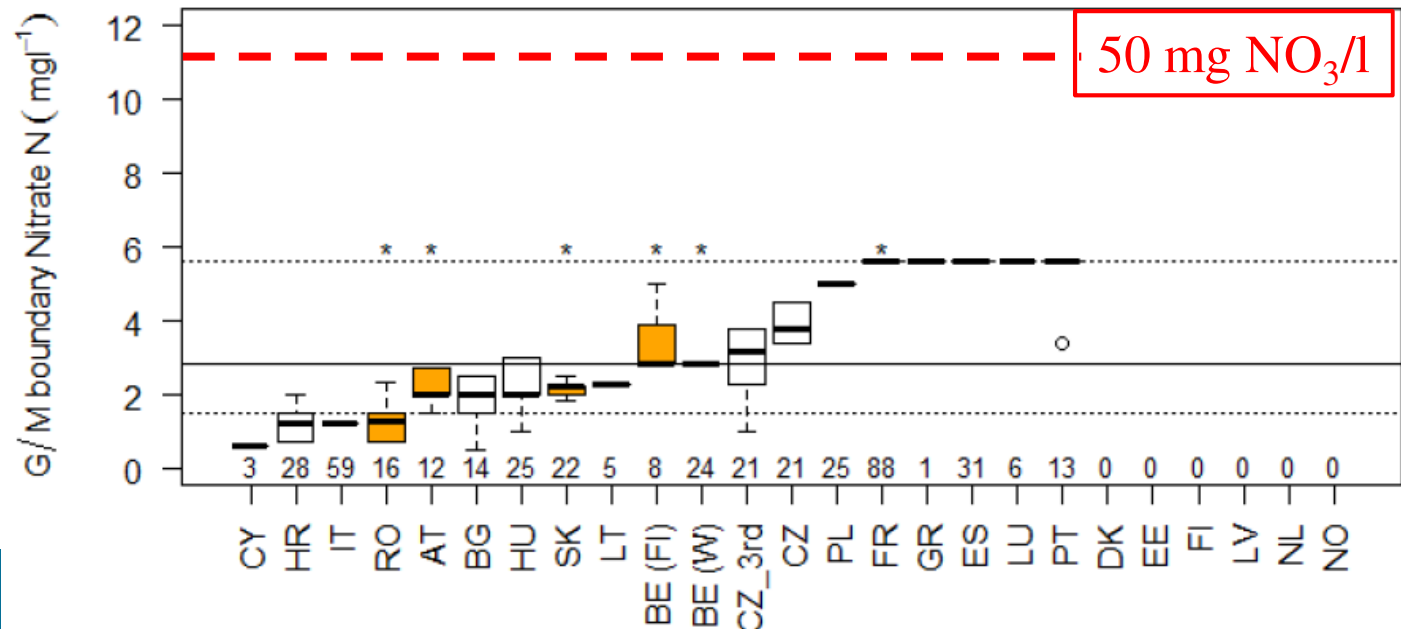
EU policy on water quality – nutrients (1)

- Water Framework Directive (WFD): aiming at good status for sustainable use and ecology
- Nitrate Directive (ND): reducing and preventing pollution, including eutrophication of surface water
- Drinking Water Directive: protection of human health
- EU Directives with different objectives and instruments
- European Commission is clear:
 - “member states should reach all objectives”
 - WFD (Art. 11): it is up to the member state to decide whether measures are part of Action Program under Nitrate Directive or additional measures WFD



EU policy on water quality – nutrients (2)

- Objective for eutrophication of surface water according WFD is more stringent than 50 mg NO₃/l in groundwater used for ND!
- Result: difficult for Member States to get (political) support for additional WFD measures related to agricultural emissions





EU policy on water quality – pesticides

- Water Framework Directive: aiming at good status for sustainable use and ecology; standards in water bodies
- Regulation 1107/2009/EC: authorisation of plant protection products
- Regulation 528/2012/EU: biocidal products & precautionary principle
- Directive 2009/128/EC: sustainable use of pesticides
- Drinking water directive: protection of human health

- Result:
 - Pesticides are applied
 - In several water bodies: quality standards are exceeded
 - Difficult for member states to take additional national measures (level playing field, illegal import, ...)



EU policy on water quantity – abstraction/drought

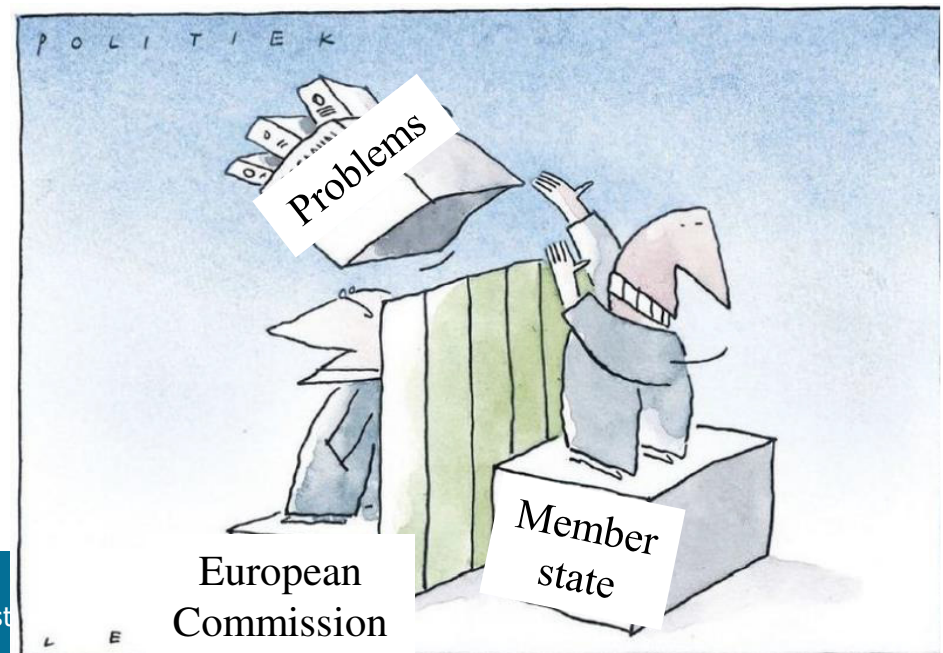
- Water Framework Directive: aiming at good status, also for the quantity of ground water
- Bird- and Habitat Directive: protection of specific areas
- Different objectives (natural development/processes versus protection)
- Different spatial requirements & different deadlines
- Result:
 - Difficult for member states to tackle problems in desiccated natural areas





The way forward?

- Water Directors stressed that the work on water and agriculture can only be successful **with a full engagement of the water- and the agriculture administrations**, at Member State and Commission level





Dutch Presidency (1^e half of 2016)

- Questionnaire for water- and agricultural directors of Member States
- Need for more effective integration of Water- and Agriculture Policies (both national and EU level)
 - Water quantity
 - Soil management (water quality, nutrients)
 - Pricing
- Water directors meeting, Amsterdam – 9-10 June 2016
 - Good practice cases
 - Expert meeting planned for 24th October in Bratislava to prepare:
 - Special meeting of both Water Directors and Rural Development Directors in spring 2017
- European Commission presented Taskforce on water agriculture nexus (both DG ENVI and DG AGRI) to improve implementation of existing policy & integration across policies



Expert meeting – 24th October in Bratislava

Preliminary conclusions:

- Directives are working on paper, implementation is a problem
- Still knowledge gaps, data often insufficient at regional scale
- Generic measures versus local measures
- Make improving water status profitable for farmers
- Involvement of farmers, but also market / consumers / retail
- Better enforcement of legal obligations
- EU: alignment of policies, greening CAP
- Member States: more ambitious (integrated) Action Program's & River Basin Management Plan's



Boundary conditions for a further cooperation (1 of 2)

1. Acknowledge each other's objectives and interests
 - Good status of water bodies ---- Income for the farmer
 - Agree upon the definition of "Sustainable agriculture"
2. Communication
 - Learn each other's 'language'
 - Be aware of multiple requirements for farmers
 - Share good practices and show results (but not with "one-out-all-out")





Boundary conditions for a further cooperation (1 of 2)

3. Financing

- Funding should be an incentive for good practice (Greening CAP)
- “Polluter pays” principle
- Circular Economy

4. Local autonomy

- Facilitate tailor made solutions
- Local financial and juridical arrangements





Agriculture, part of the problem or part of the solution for water issues?

- Agriculture, part of the problem **and** part of the solution
- Further alignment of European policies and funding
 - aiming at sustainable agriculture.
- Further improvement of national implementation,
 - with more attention to local autonomy.





Thank you for your attention!