

16 Member States face EU action for failing to submit WFD and FRMD management plans

The European Commission has launched infringement proceedings against 16 EU countries for failing to submit the management plans required under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Flood Risk Management Directive. The countries that have not met the deadline for submitting their plans under either or both EU directives are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. These countries will receive a formal notification of the procedure and have two months to respond. For more information: <https://europe.wetlands.org/news/eu-countries-face-eu-legal-action-over-lack-of-sustainable-water-management-plans/>

Last trilogue on the Renewable Energy Directive - Hydropower continues to count towards renewable energy targets

On 30 March, the last trilogue on the Renewable Energy Directive ended in Brussels. Wood biomass can still be burned for energy production and count towards renewable energy targets if certain sustainability criteria are met, but this means that millions of cubic metres of forest are cut down every year for biomass.

In the case of hydropower, no sustainability criteria (Article 29b proposed by the ENVI Committee) were adopted. In addition, hydropower is also part of the Emergency Regulation on Renewable Energy Permitting, which allows the re-commissioning and construction of new hydropower plants in accelerated areas. The required environmental impact assessments cannot be carried out properly, if at all, given the timeframe (maximum 6 months) for issuing permits.

It is well known that forests and integrated management of our water resources are the key to mitigating and combating climate change (see the situation in Europe and worldwide with small and medium-sized reservoirs, etc.). Despite this scientific consensus, EU leaders and decision-makers are going further and advocating for new renewable energy targets by 2030 (from 30 to 42.5%), even if some of this energy is not truly renewable.

Read Euronatur's article here: <https://www.euronatur.org/en/what-we-do/news/disappointing-results-of-last-trilogue-on-renewable-energy-directive>

Read more about the Renewable Energy Directive here: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive_en

Read more about accelerating the development of renewable energy here: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_23_2061

Drought and extremely low groundwater levels in France and Spain

In the department of Pyrénées-Orientales, one of the most drought-affected regions in France, four villages had to be supplied with bottled water from mid-April. The National Geological Institute (BRGM) announced that about 75 % of the groundwater level was found to be too low - compared to about 58 % percent the year before.

Read more about the situation here: <https://www.zeit.de/wissen/umwelt/2023-04/frankreich-trockenheit-trinkwasser-grundwasser>

Catalonia is facing a 32-month drought, with the last two years being the driest since measurements began in 1914. Here, too, groundwater levels are low, with 42% of groundwater recharge in spring, compared to 73% at the same time last year. No rain, no snow in the Pyrenees, poor water management (e.g. through reservoirs or intensive agriculture) are leading to extreme water scarcity. In the province of Barcelona, the reservoirs' fill level is 14%, while the normal fill level would be 78%. In the Sau reservoir, the water level dropped so low in March - to less than 10% of the reservoir's capacity - that fishes were emergency harvested. Leaking water pipes and mass tourism are exacerbating the effects of the drought. The Barcelona Regional Urban Development Authority shows that hotels consume 12% of the available drinking water. In general, southern Europe, and the Mediterranean region in particular, is one of the most vulnerable areas when it comes to climate change.

Read more about the situation in Catalonia here:

<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/duerrespanien-katalonien-regen-wassermangel-marodes-wassernetz-1.5795007>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-65129735.amp>

How dams affect the Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta provides about half of Vietnam's rice production and most of its fruit and aquaculture production. It accounts for 18% of Vietnam's GDP and provides livelihoods for around 17 million people. However, the Mekong Delta has changed drastically in recent years due to natural and human factors.

The third part of the monthly Mekong Water Data Hour, in which Dr Doan Van Binh presents the impact of dams on floods, droughts, sediment disturbance and morphology, is available online at <https://www.stimson.org/event/mekong-water-data-hour-how-dams-impact-the-mekong-delta/>.

Is the era of building large dams coming to an end?

A study published in 2021 by scientists at the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health comes to the surprising conclusion that the construction of large dams worldwide has declined from a peak in the late 1970s of about 1,500 per year to about 50 per year in 2020, citing escalating construction costs, the rise of solar and wind energy and growing public opposition as reasons for the drastic decline. Experts say the world has reached "peak dams", which would be good news for river ecosystems.

More information at: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/hydropower-dams-energy-decline>

How tech giants contribute to global water scarcity

So far, researchers and developers have focused primarily on reducing the carbon footprint of AI models. However, a crucial aspect that has often been overlooked is their water footprint. In "Uncovering and Addressing the Secret Water Footprint of AI Models", a new paper that is not yet peer-reviewed, researchers from the University of Colorado Riverside and the University of Texas Arlington fill this gap by shedding light on the significant water consumption. The water footprint of US-based data centres was 626 billion litres in 2014. Some IT giants have now committed to becoming water positive by 2030.

More information:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/federicoguerrini/2023/04/14/ais-unsustainable-water-use-how-tech-giants-contribute-to-global-water-shortages/>

Drinking water in France polluted by banned pesticides

In recent months, public water suppliers and contracted companies across France have been alarmed by high concentrations of metabolites resulting from the degradation of chlorothalonil, a pesticide with fungicidal properties marketed by the Swiss company Syngenta since 1970 and banned in Europe in 2019. According to a report by the French health authority, about a third of drinking water in France does not meet quality standards. In a report published on Thursday 6 April, the French Agency for Safety, Health and the Environment (ANSES) confirmed the widespread presence of the metabolite in question - also known as R471811 - in surface and groundwater. This metabolite was not detectable until recently, as not all accredited laboratories were able to measure it.

More information at: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/04/10/drinking-water-in-france-extensively-polluted-by-banned-pesticide_6022353_7.html

Dates preview 2023 International :

Wednesday, 24 May 2023 9 am – 5 pm Katholische Akademie Hamburg , Herrengraben 4	Estuaries - Current topics in aquatic ecology and hydraulic engineering Watercourse development in estuarine and coastal areas, the way to an improved understanding of estuarine systems, the future of the Eider - the Eider as a habitat, aquatic and hydraulic engineering colloquium. Visual illuminations will be provided. Participation fee: 150,- €. Registration under the link https://conference-service.com/BfG_0523/welcome.html
1 st – 4 th of May 2023 Festive Day on Friday, 2 June Klosterhotel Walkenried Lkr. Göttingen www.klosterhotelwalkenried.com	Festival symposium on Natura 2000 and nature conservation in gypsum karst Uniform recording of caves and other underground habitats with the CaveLife app (Natura 2000 award) Gypsum karst landscape in the world (online) and in the Southern Harz and Germany Round table. Registration at: www.vdhk.de
Sunday, 4 June 2023 11:00 – 19:00	28th Environment Festival at the Brandenburger Tor Next exit: FAIRkehrswende! (Fair transport transition)

Brandenburger Tor, Berlin	https://www.umweltfestival.de/
Tuesday, 6 June 2023 10:30 am – 3:15 pm Uckermärkische Bühnen Schwedt (Oder) , Berliner Straße 46/48 and Livestream	The Oder - valuable ecosystem under stress Conference with Federal Environment Minister Steffi Lemke and Brandenburg's Environment Minister Axel Vogel + Panel « Significance of the Oder for the Region - Impact of the 2022 Environmental Catastrophe »
Thursday, 8 June 2023 9 am – 5 pm Seminar room at GLS Bank (Düsternstr. 10) Hamburg	Living Alster Symposium Water protection in the big city Registration until 31 May 2023 at info@lebendigealster.de
Wednesday, 14 June 2023 Meeting point: 11 am S-bahn Waidmannlust Berlin-Reinickendorf Duration: 11 am – 2 pm	Dialogue at the Packereigraben Explore the situation at the upgraded areas at the Packereigraben, take water samples, examine the diversity and number of small aquatic animals, introduce gravel into the water body. https://wassernetzberlin.de/2023/05/10/dialog-am-packereigraben-in-reinickendorf-mittwoch-14-juni-2023/ Registration under: athenais.georges@grueneliga-berlin.de
Tuesday, 27 June 2023 10:30 am – 12 am MESZ Online	Improving National River Continuity Restoration Policies for European Ecosystem-based River Management Webinar. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGnae6jZ9P6XthUjqBA5AES99GsyUmYGyyL-IPrIOf6XD XRQ/viewform
31 st of July – 4 th of August 2023 Kutzow See (Oderdelta) Transfer from train station Löcknitz or 7km by bike	Water Pollution and Risk Management Monday 31.07 – European and national focuses, Tuesday 1.08 – Local case day, Wednesday 2.08 – Transboundary riverine areas, Thursday 3.08 – Ecology of living rivers, Friday 4.08 – Exchange and end RIVER UNIVERSITY EDITION 2023 https://www.ccb.se/river-university-2023
26 – 28 September 2023 Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn Ahrstrasse 45	5th European Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change Riverine and Coastal Wetlands Lectures, parallel workshops, poster exhibition, excursion. Participation fee: 65,- €. https://bioclim2023.adelphi.de/
11 – 12 October 2023 Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad)	Magdeburg Water Protection Seminar 2023

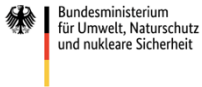
The Water Network Berlin (Wassernetz Berlin) offers a series of dialogue events and workshops as well as practical upgrading measures. You can subscribe to the newsletter and the latest event information at <https://wassernetz-berlin.de/>

The GRÜNE LIGA Berlin invites you to a dialogue event at the Packereigraben in Berlin-Reinickendorf on Wednesday, 14 June 2023. Meeting point: 11:00 am at the S-Bahn Waidmannslust. Duration: 11 am - 2 pm. We will continue our chemical-physical measurements and again look for small aquatic animals. Together with you, we would like to discuss further steps for the ecological improvement of the watercourse on the basis of the observations. In addition, we will again introduce gravel into the watercourse. Registration under: athenais.georges@grueneliga-berlin.de

<https://www.grueneliga.de/index.php/de/themen-projekte/wasser/1307-2-dialogveranstaltung-ampackereigraben-wassernetz-berlin>

At the 28th Environmental Festival at the Brandenburg Gate, you can find us at the stand of the GRÜNE LIGA Berlin.

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