

WATER



Land quality and value are mainly determined by its soil, climatic and water conditions. The efficient use of natural resources and the exchange of experiences stimulate the future development of rural areas, in particular as this relates to sustainable land and water management. Landowners have a strong desire to pass on their land to their children and grandchildren in good condition.

ELO's activities on water policy are focused on:

- Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)
- Directive on Groundwater (Directive 2006/118/ EC)
- Directive on Flood Risk Management (Directive 2007/60/ EC)
- Guidance document on "Land Use & Groundwater"



I. Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a legislative framework to protect and improve the quality of all water resources within the European Union. In May 2001 the European Commission, Member States and Norway agreed to set up a **Common Implementation Strategy (CIS)** which aims at developing a common understanding and guidance on key elements of this Directive. The structure of the CIS is based on several Working Groups. At present, ELO is a full member of the following groups: *Strategic Coordination Group*, *Strategic Steering Group "WFD and Agriculture"*, *Strategic Steering Group "WFD and Hydro-morphology"*, *Working Group on Flood Risk Management* and *Stakeholder Forum on Water Scarcity and Droughts*.

ELO's key priorities on water:

- To promote cost-effective land management measures which protect water resources.
- To work towards the establishment of workable legal and policy tools at European, national and local levels
- To contribute to overcoming challenges and identify opportunities for rural areas
- To identify and develop existing and future mechanisms and measures within the CAP and Rural Development
- Policy (cross-compliance, agri-environmental schemes) which could help to meet the WFD objectives



II. Directive on Groundwater (Directive 2006 /118 /EC)

Being part of the River Basin Management, the Directive has introduced a regime setting underground water quality standards and has introduced measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater. Complementing the WFD it requires the establishment of quality standards by the end of 2008 and achieving environmental objectives by 2015, as well as complying with good chemical status criteria.

ELO's priorities on groundwater:

- To follow-up the implementation of the Directive in order to ensure the correct interdependence with other environmental legislation such as the Nitrates Directive.
- To advocate for proper management at a local level considering groundwater as both an economic and social resource.
- To look for the adoption of a system of incentives to encourage small-scale groundwater users.

III. Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risk (Directive 2007/60/EC)

Coming into effect in November 2007, this Directive requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, and aims at reducing and managing the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, infrastructure, cultural heritage and property. The preliminary assessments (identifying the river basins and associated coastal areas at risk of flooding) have to be carried out by 2011.

ELO participated in the drafting process as land use planning, land use management and their economic impact will play a key role in determining whether the owner is left with reasonable economic use of the property.

Landowners and land managers are very concerned about the Flood Risk Management Directive's impact on issues such as property rights, insurability or the economic and ecological value of their land. ELO believes that extreme weather events are linked to climate change, and it will be actively involved in future planned working groups on climate change and water protection.

