

April 2007

Editorial

Is water simply a forgotten product of the forest? It is that and much more – all land, when properly managed, is an illustration of water's capacity to purify vital resources.

The water-biodiversity link also demonstrates its qualitative, quantitative and regulatory functions. Lawyers are not comfortable with water and distribution issues, availability or water quality. They are intimidated by ancient and time-honoured traditions which, while recognizing the renewable character of this resource so vital to human life, reflect the will of the State. These same traditions are used to justify controlling water resources without involving the citizens. In recent years however people have become more aware of how badly used and distributed water is and mentalities are changing.

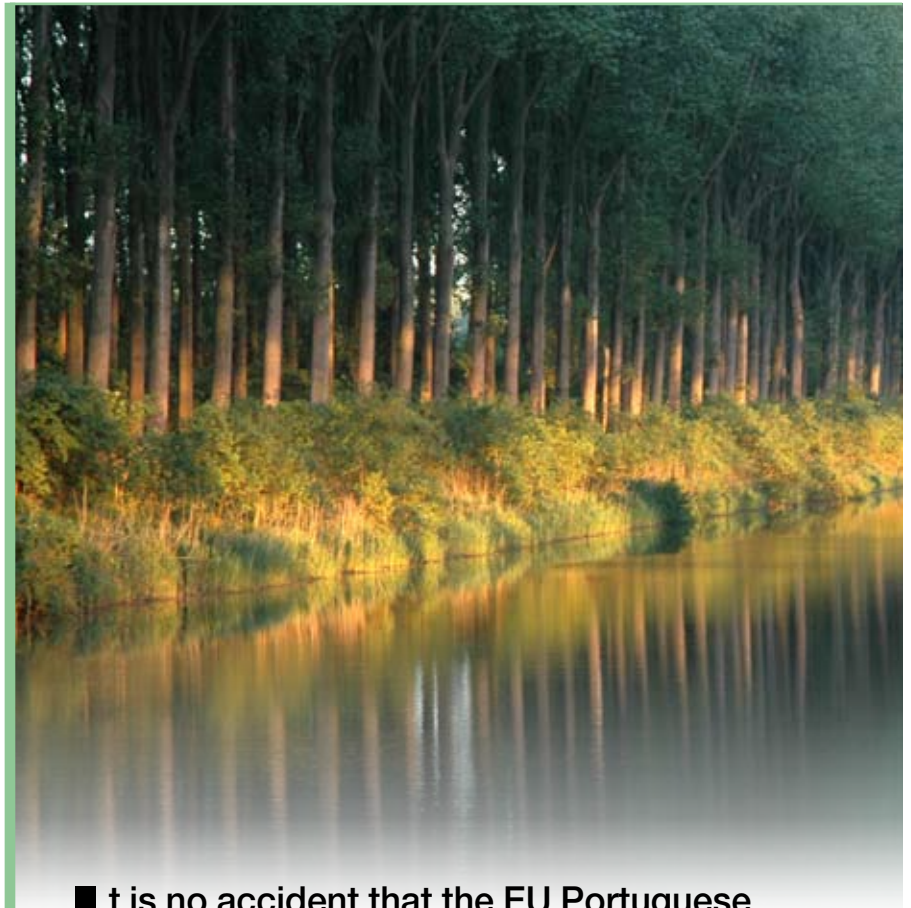
How can abundance replace scarcity? By encouraging private initiative; if every owner in Europe was encouraged to create a small watershed the available resources would double. Increasing production, monitoring quality and reducing consumption will sustainably develop this resource.

Industrial development over the last two centuries has favoured quantity to the detriment of quality, and in so doing has jeopardized availability. This new approach attempts to counter waste and the stagnation of resources.

At the World Water Forum in 2009 landowners and water users will have the opportunity to highlight the fundamental role played by rural landowners facing the challenge of water. This will demonstrate the growth potential they represent when management is properly geared to needs.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

Water and forest



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It is no accident that the EU Portuguese Presidency made water, climate and biodiversity its three environmental priorities (see ELO-CS n° 112 and the 18 month programme of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian presidencies CE 17079/06). The quantity and quality of water are diminishing in Europe and most of the countries of the world, given a growing demand and diffuse or sporadic pollution.

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CountrySide

is a publication of ELO in
English, French, German,
Italian and Spanish.

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5 Euros

New operational approaches are consequently as urgent as they are indispensable. As far as climate change is concerned it is undeniable that its effects are to be seen in water, its availability and its most extreme manifestations: drought and floods. Finally is not protecting biodiversity, which is the living and vulnerable fabric of our land, also a means of giving back to water some of its qualitative, quantitative and regulatory functions, while at the same time recognizing the positive and constructive management role played by landowners?

The European Water Framework Directive – WFD (see ELO-CS n° 97) has the merit of going straight to the point and addressing water management as part of its goal of improving the ecological state of bodies of water for 2015. Horizontal instruments and processes support it in the areas of diffuse pollution (in particular nitrates), soil, flooding and, not least the management of natural resources.

The essential role of water protection is relevant here. The economic interests at stake are clear in the light of the experience of several countries, as are the political commitments which require rapid and efficient implementation.

Forests (40% of the EU's territory), meadows and wetlands together play a vital role: a) physical, chemical and microbiological filtering of water which penetrates soil and b) locally limiting floods and droughts by regulating rises and peaks. In the flood plain of Morava-Dyje between Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia for example, maintaining management practices allows this dual role not only to be enhanced

but also preserves biodiversity, boosts wood production and generates income, in particular through hunting and tourism (www.unece.org/env/water).

Economically these water services have an identifiable monetary value. This can be negotiated through a payment system using different scales, but what approach should be used? Firstly a precise, prior evaluation must identify the scale, territory and time period of the relationship between an ecosystem and water, as well as the type of service provided for the community. These services are clearly provided by a natural resource, that of a forestry ecosystem, and also by land-owner management practices. Then a payment scheme for services rendered can be introduced; this is a positive addition to the 'polluter pays' principle but is above all an integrated approach to conservation and resource management. It recognizes the fundamental link between producer land-owners (goods and services) and user-beneficiaries by providing an appropriate, fair income.

There are many examples of payment schemes throughout Europe and the world. Forests in particular are at the heart of many instances which for years now have demonstrated the validity of sustainable management by balancing three vectors: respect for the environment, economic viability and public interest.

The OECD, among other organizations, recently reiterated its support for a 'forests and water policy' which rewards the supply of services by land owners rather than granting subsidies intended to produce goods and services.

In terms of territory the relationship between forests and water is not limited to rural areas alone but is also part of the life cycle around, for example, watersheds or urban zones.

The DCE focuses on watersheds using territorial basin units and plans for managing the basin's water. In every basin, water is the link between the different types of property and the forms of land use. This fact has led to the definition of technical and political tools for the integrated management of resources in the watershed, with the active involvement of local stakeholders and a partnership economy between the public and private sectors. This is based, among other things, on payment for environmental services and more particularly those linked to water (see the Guide on Integrated Management of Basins, FAO 2006 available at www.fao.org/forestry/site/forest-sandwater/en).

As far as urban zones are concerned, according to the last United Nations report on water, about a third of the hundred biggest cities in the world benefit from forestry resources for a large part of their drinking water requirements. (www.unesco.org/wwap/wwdr/index/shtml). The example of the City of New York is well-known and confirmed by both environmental and economic results. This city has some of the best drinking water in the world thanks to the management of forests situated upstream of the Catskill, Delaware and Croton watersheds. Its tailor-made management and payment system has allowed the authorities of this metropolis to avoid over 6 billion dollars initial investment for a purification system which would have had no link to the watershed and its natural resources. On 3 January 2003, the New York Times dedicated a page to "a forgotten product of the forest: water" in which it stressed that over 60 million citizens

in 33 states depended on forests for their drinking water which has an economic value estimated at about 4 billion dollars per year.

For the last two decades in the United Kingdom the Forestry Commission has followed management guidelines for water intended for landowners. These guidelines, supported by policies and clear legal and financial measures, provide financial, legal and tax advantages which are vital for good resource management (www.forestry.gov.uk).

But where are Europe's policies and commitments to strengthen this environmental and economic issue which is so vital for the future?

As far as the DCE and its associated measures are concerned, there is scant attention paid to forestry resources and their territorial importance. As everyone knows we cannot count on an EU forestry policy, but this should not prevent consistency and harmonization between measures or instruments which of necessity affect forests. The work of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe is on the other hand too timid, although the governments are committed to specific action. This is true of the last conference in Warsaw which adopted a specific resolution on forests and water.

The challenge of water in Europe as elsewhere in the world is both vital and unavoidable in rural and urban zones alike. Agriculture and more diverse activities, including energy, health, tourism and leisure require immediate, practical action.

It is ELO's opinion that by the next World Water Forum in 2009 in Turkey, Europe - the member states, the candidates and all organizations involved - must take decisive steps to progress in the following areas:

- Highlight the role and provide infor-

mation about the importance of the link between forests, ecosystems, biodiversity and water, as well as climate change, forests and water, at different decision-making levels. Harness the political, legal and financial resources necessary for an intersectoral challenge of this nature (e.g. a guide to payment systems for environmental services focusing on water with quality information).

- Direct those responsible for the DCE and its application towards the topics of natural resources and water (e.g. joint action between the Commission and national watershed authorities).
- Invite the EU to implement programmes and projects on sustainable management of forest-water and environmental payment systems (ELO undertakes to bring the partners together and propose action).
- Implement the commitments of the member states and other European countries which are signatories of the Warsaw resolution on forests and water in order to promote practical, sustainable action in cooperation with landowners.
- Include forests and ecosystems in the negotiations and positions of the next World Water Forum 2009 by paying more attention to their role and potential.

Pass your reactions on to ELO in order to make progress with these goals!

■ Pier-Carlo ZINGARI

Pier-Carlo ZINGARI contributed to the last issue of the FAO UNASYLVA 229 review on forests and water.
www.fao.org/forestry/site/unasyuva/en/



A bright future or a dubious prospect?

Today the environment is at the heart of our society's concerns. Faced with global warming and dwindling oil reserves, the European Union is focusing its attention on renewable energy with the ambitious objective of reaching 20% in 2020. Wind energy seems to be one of the main contenders, but not everyone is enthusiastic. Some critics even call it an ecological hoax! ¹



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According to Christian KJAER, the director general of the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), wind energy will make a major contribution to the 20% renewable energy goal. Since it contributes to the fight against global warming, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing our dependence on fuel imports, it has the potential to meet the growing demand for energy by giving an essential boost to local economies. He states that today wind energy is the second most important energy in Europe in terms of job creation and economic activity in the electricity pro-

duction sector, adding that if the 27 members agree to meet their national goals quickly Europe could see a massive expansion in its wind energy.

The figures recently published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) also confirm this rapid progress with a 30% increase in power stations in the world in 2007 compared to 2006. Although the United States saw the greatest increase followed by China, Europe remains the main wind energy market. Europe's production capacity is now at 3.7% of its electric-

ity requirements, and in 2007 there was an 8.5GW increase, i.e. 17% more than the year before, which was mainly attributable to Spain. Wind energy has therefore become one of the main stakeholders on the world energy market with nearly 25 billion euros invested annually in the construction of new equipment.

Professor Arthouros ZERVOS, chairman of GWEC, concludes: "The increase in the price of a barrel of oil combined with increasing awareness of the need for security of supply in raw materials means that wind kilowatt hours are often

1 Industrial Wind Energy, an ecological hoax and a financial scandal, The Sustainable Development Federation, March 2007.
 2 *Industrial Wind Energy, the hidden failure in European statistics*, The Sustainable Development Federation, December 2007, pg 9.
 3 *Le Monde* 15 February 2008, *Le Figaro Magazine*, 9 February 2008, *Science & Vie*, March 2008.

the best option to increase electricity production capacity, from all points of view.”

However, a growing number of associations of opponents and local communities are expressing their worries and exasperation loud and clear as wind energy expands, since the results seem to them to be “at the very least disappointing from both an economic and environmental point of view”.² Using studies to support their claims, they have a long list of grievances, fueling a debate which has been widely reported in recent months, particularly in the French-speaking press with a series of cutting articles in *le Monde*, *le Figaro* magazine and *Science & Vie*.³

Of course wind energy should not be seen as the miracle solution, but rather as one of the indispensable alternatives which can diversify our energy resources. The choice of site must be carefully thought through, because although it is inexhaustible and non-polluting, this renewable energy also has its weaknesses and limits. Its productivity can be intermittent and according to some inadequate, while remaining costly. In fact its current profitability is partly due to subsidies and high sales prices. Wind energy cannot be stored and the generators only work 20 – 25% of the time, either because the wind is too weak or too strong. Heat, nuclear or water power is needed as a back-up. Moreover, its CO2 emission rate should not be estimated during the working period alone but over the entire ‘life cycle’ with a production phase which consumes concrete, steel and major amounts of energy. This paints a rather different picture, but nonetheless a figure of 9 - 25g CO2 per KW/H is still much better

than many other energies. Noise pollution and stroboscopic effects are also an irritation to those in the immediate vicinity, and there is a risk to birds, although this can be minimized by avoiding migration routes.

Despite the fact wind energy generally has a good public image, many fear it will be a catastrophic blot on the landscape if it continues to invade sites of natural beauty. The windmills can be as high as 150m and are therefore visible within a radius of up to 10km. There are many impact studies commissioned by windmill constructors but certain protected areas are under threat, suggesting there are loopholes in the rules meant to ban wind plants within a defined radius around listed or protected sites. Although the renewable energy objective is a necessary one, it cannot be attained at the cost of our heritage, which is just as essential for our future, when there are plenty of other equally appropriate sites.

This is a complicated debate and is far from over. All those involved agree there is a need to reduce energy consumption using the cheapest, cleanest and most efficient method. But this presupposes the development of appropriate energy saving technology and some serious thinking about our society’s lifestyle with some major sacrifices to boot.

■ Donatienne de SEJOURNET

Info:
www.ewea.org
www.thewindpower.net
www.environnementdurable.net



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THE INSTITUTIONAL ECHO

GMOs: recent developments

SAA (International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications - an institute based in the United States and funded by organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and Monsanto) has produced a study demonstrating that in 2007 the amount of genetically modified crops grown increased by 12% - equivalent to 12.3 million hectares, making a total of 114 million hectares worldwide. This increase was followed by 2 million extra GMO farmers. However, in the European Union clear political decisions have not yet been taken.



Once again as there was no agreement (lack of qualified majority) between the European ministers of Agriculture during the last AGRI council on 18 February 2008 on five requests for authorization for GMO plants (4 for maize and 1 for the Amflora potato for industrial use and for animal feed), the dossier will return to the European Commission which will rule on the matter as it did for the previously approved GMO products.

It is to be hoped that as EFSA (European Food Safety Agency) does not consider these five plants to be dangerous, the Commission's decision will be positive. However certain member states remain very hostile to genetically modified organisms, as the safeguard clause invoked by France for MON 810 maize illustrates. EFSA has 6 weeks to give its opinion, the final decisions lying with the Commission. It rejected the same

request before from Poland which has announced its intention to appeal to the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

Moreover, a German law recently allowed products such as meat, eggs and milk to be labeled 'without GMO technology'. This label should appear on the shelves some time this year.

This is the context within which ELO was invited to the press conference given by a group of discontented farmers who are members of the European Farmers' Biotech Network. Composed of rural managers from all over Europe, its aim is on the one hand to keep up to date with the most recent developments in terms of availability and performance of biotechnological crops in Europe and on the other hand to lobby civil society and political decision-makers in order to explain the farmers' urgent needs in the area.

These farmers subsequently had an appointment with the GMO representative of President BARROSO's cabinet to explain to him the difficult situation which farmers and rural managers are already in and will increasingly face in future, given the globalization of agriculture which is so disadvantageous to European farmers. If the European Union does not decide on a policy which is a little more courageous and consistent with respect to biotechnology, European farmers will be incapable of remaining competitive on a world level and Europe will be reduced to importing its food and animal fodder from countries such as Brazil which are not subject to the strict environmental regulations of the European Union under the terms of conditionality.

Europe is indeed already far behind its competitors, which have increased their yield thanks to biotechnologies not to mention the direct environmental advantages they have brought, such as saving water and a considerable reduction in the use of plant protection products.

■ Cécile BONINO



Prof. R. KENWARD, M. EBNER (MEP), L. M. CAPOULAS SANTOS (MEP), G. BLACKETT, S. STEVENSON (MEP), A. SMITH.

European Parliament: An important Intergroup declaration finalised on sustainable hunting in Scotland

The European Parliament Intergroups Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity and Countryside Activities and Sustainable Development held a joint meeting on 20 February 2008 in Strasbourg to address the topic Upland Game Management

for conservation and rural development – the Scottish Model. It highlighted that sustainable hunting, low intensity farming and environmentally friendly tourism are essential drivers in many upland regions, including the Scottish Highlands. This gathering was instigated by the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA), ELO's Scottish member under the patronage of MEPs Struan STEVENSON and Michl EBNER, the Intergroups' respective chairmen.

Geva BLACKETT from SRPBA told MEPs the significance of Scotland's grouse moorland management in supporting the social fabric of fragile areas and maintaining an important ecosystem. This management is extremely valuable to biological diversity and to local economies.

Dr Adam SMITH, of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, reviewed the range of positive conservation outcomes, including upland

wading bird breeding success and tick control. Scotland's heather moorlands are rare ecosystems of national and European importance he said. The conservation of these habitats and their associated birds and mammals together with the many social and economic benefits to rural communities is intimately linked to the management of red grouse for sport shooting .

The two Intergroups jointly endorsed these views in a declaration inviting decision-makers at EU and all levels to acknowledge the benefits of sustainable hunting, such as the Scottish example of moorland management, in terms of habitat and wildlife management, ecosystem conservation, income, employment and social fabric and requested some policy support for private investment in these activities.

■ Alexandre MARGHELIS



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THE ENLARGED EUROPE

Tetra Pak highlights need for concerted industry and EU action to reduce CO₂ emissions

International standards and rules needed to guide consumer behaviour Tetra Pak, a world leader in food processing and packaging solutions, today called on EU policy makers and the packaging industry to take concerted action to contribute to the reduction of CO₂ emissions.



© Tetra Pak

“Packaging has a key role to play in supporting moves towards a low carbon economy, as do European policy-makers in creating the right framework for effective business and consumer action,” said Tetra Pak Environment Director Erika MINK, speaking at a conference hosted at the European Commission.

“We need internationally agreed rules and scientifically robust standards for determining the carbon footprint of a given package or product in order to create the right policy support for business action and consumer behaviour,” said MINK.

Meglana KUNEVA, the European Commissioner for EU consumer policy, opened the conference on “A Low Carbon Future: Releasing the Potential for Business,” which was co-sponsored by Tetra Pak and the British Retail Consortium. Highlighting the 25 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent saved by the packaging sector in the last decade, MINK, said: “We believe the packaging sector has the poten-

tial to make further contributions to CO₂ reduction by a combination of company commitments, voluntary agreements, and partnering with key stakeholders.”

As part of WWF’s Climate Savers’ Programme, Tetra Pak has committed to reduce its CO₂ emissions between 2005 and 2010 by 40,000 tons world-wide, or 10% in absolute terms. Tetra Pak is also a partner of the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign supported by the Commission.

A second priority for Tetra Pak is to use a maximum of renewable materials in its packages, a practice which further mitigates CO₂ impact. Already an average 75 percent of Tetra Pak cartons are made from renewable wood fibres and the company seeks to increase this percentage by replacing non-renewable material with renewable material. “It is our aim to offer the packaging solutions with the lowest carbon footprint in our market segments,” said MINK.

Recycling, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding landfill, is another key priority for Tetra Pak, which currently recycles 21 billion cartons each year. This is expected to increase by 1 billion each year.” In Europe 30% of all beverage cartons are recycled into new paper products, saving some 300,000 tonnes CO₂ equivalents from landfill every year.

“With the positive response Tetra Pak is getting from retailers and other market stakeholders, our long-term commitments to reduce our carbon footprint now appear to be bearing fruit,” said MINK.

Beyond its own CO₂ reductions, the packaging sector may also have a broader role to play. “Through the symbols and environmental information it can carry, packaging can help guide consumer and so spread sustainable consumption practices across the European market,” she said.

For further information please contact:

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Erika.Mink@tetrapak.com

About Tetra Pak

As a world leader in food processing and packaging solutions, Tetra Pak’s motto “protects what’s good”™ reflects the philosophy upon which we conduct our business in order to make food safe and available, everywhere.

1958-2008: the European Parliament celebrates half a century

On 12 March 2008 the European Parliament celebrated its 50th anniversary in the Strasbourg hemicycle. On this occasion the president of the parliament Hans-Gert PÖTTERING declared, “Today we have 785 members from 27 member states and 150 national political parties, divided between most of the seven political groups. We are a legislative and budgetary body, on an equal footing with the Council of Ministers, we exercise political control over the European Commission and appoint its President, we represent some 500 million European citizens and have become a key player in European politics.”

Background

Born on 19 March 1958, there is no other institution like it in the world. No other directly elected supra-national parliament has such wide-ranging powers. Originally named the “European Assembly” in the treaties, it had 142 members who spoke four official languages and was presided over by Robert SCHUMANN. He believed that this institution should play a ‘special role in the development of a European spirit’. In March 1962 the Assembly decided to call itself a parliament. Although the founding treaties mentioned the plan to hold elections, it was 1976 before the Council decided to hold direct elections to the parliament. It was this universal suffrage which, enforced for the first time during the 1979 elections at a time when the parliament had few rights, radically transformed its political influence. Since then the parliament’s powers have continued to expand – it was officially recognized as a ‘Parliament’ in the 1986 Single European Act, given powers of co-decision in the legislative procedure by the Treaty of Maastricht (1993) and its powers were broadened once again by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. The Lisbon Treaty will make co-decision the rule, placing it on an equal footing with the EU Council of Ministers.



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The European Parliament in the European Union’s institutional system

The European Union’s institutional system stands out because of its unique structure - the European Commission is not a government in the traditional sense of the word, the Council is a legislator rather similar to a government and for many years the European Parliament suffered from a lack of legislative powers. The institutional triangle is based on an ingenious balance which does not obey a classical division of powers. It is perhaps this that gives rise to criticism of a lack of transparency and democracy. However, the European institutions have evolved to support the process of integration and geographical enlargement and the inter-institutional mechanisms have become stronger.

In fifty years the European Parliament has gained in power, strengthening Europe as a whole. Faced

with the threat of a parliamentary motion of censure, the Commission with Jacques SANTER as president resigned on 15 March 1999. This was a major event in the political history of Europe, the first manifestation of the Commission’s political responsibility to the European Parliament.

The Lisbon Treaty must further strengthen the Community institutions as a whole and broaden the Parliament’s powers. It will strengthen the Commission’s double democratic legitimacy by greater links with the European Parliament and the European Council. During the ceremony José Manuel BARROSO underlined that, “Europe needs strong institutions to meet the challenge of the times, globalization – a challenge which no member state can face alone.”

■ Alexandre MARGHELIS

Source: European Parliament

Every Drop Counts - sustainable use of water in agriculture

Water and agriculture are intrinsically connected and irrigation has been part of farming almost as long as man has been known to farm with archaeologists finding that the Sumerian people in the Mesopotamia used artificial watering on their farmland as early as 6000 BC.



© EC

But much has changed since the early days of irrigation and water has become an increasingly scarce resource. Other economic sectors and households now demand more water, which has put pressure on farmers to develop more efficient ways of irrigating their lands.

When managed well, irrigation of farmland can actually lead to a number of environmental benefits. Irrigation systems can create diverse and intricate landscapes, which support a variety of wildlife and have important cultural and historic value. In the same way, the creation and management of rice fields often provides important feeding grounds for some bird species, which overwinter in the warmer Mediterranean climate. Moreover, through a redis-

tribution of water resources, new irrigation projects can contribute to improving both the process of surface water being filtered into ground water and habitat conservation in the areas receiving the new water. This may be the case, for instance, for irrigation projects that entail the creation of wetland areas, which may provide new feeding and/or breeding opportunities for wildlife.

But irrigation as part of intensive farming can lead, and has in fact led, to unsustainable use of water in some areas of Europe. In some Member States of the European Union, agriculture takes up more than half of the national water resources as a great deal of water is wasted through the use of old fashioned irrigation systems.

The challenge is clear as the problem of water scarcity is not likely to disappear in the near future. In fact, it is widely expected to become even more prominent as global warming continues. A decrease in average annual or seasonal rainfall as a consequence of changing climate conditions will be a serious problem. In many European river basins the competition for scarce water resources will be even tougher.

Although issues of water quantity are generally considered within the sole competence of the Member States, there are certain ways in which the European Union is taking an active role in promoting a more sustainable use of water in farming. Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU has already taken a string of actions to help farmers towards a less water intensive production methods.

The 2003 decoupling of the direct aids under the CAP has removed incentives to intensify production and produce more than the market can absorb. Such positive development towards more market orientation in agriculture is particularly important for the fruit and vegetable sector, which is particularly water demanding.

At the same time, the EU rural development policy provides tools to offset the damage that bad weather and water scarcity cause to farms, forests and rural economies.

For example, rural development money has already been used to alleviate water scarcity. This takes place through support for concrete actions to save water in farming, for instance aid to farmers investing in more efficient, modern and technologically advanced irrigation equipment.

The concrete results of these rural development actions are beginning to show. In the five years from 2000-2005, a total of 2300 projects aiming at an improvement of existing irrigation systems were put in place in Spain alone, which has led to an estimated decrease of water use of 2,800 Hm³. In fact, a water-saving indicator shows that on average 1,300 m³ of water were saved for every hectare in 2005, and up to 157,000 m³ of water on land with specific water intensive crops such as bananas.

In connection with the Health Check of the CAP, which will be published on the 20th of May this year, the Commission will put forward proposals that will give a boost to its rural development policy. It plans to introduce new measures to help farmers adapt to the challenges of the 21st century: climate change, water management, biodiversity and the increased demand of bioenergy.

This new and expanded toolbox is of course not free and would according to the Commission proposal be sponsored by an increased transfer of money from the farmers' direct payments to the rural development policy – the so-called modulation.

But it is not just in the Commission that water issues are being targeted. Along with their not so distant cousin in Climate Change, water issues are at the top of the political agenda in most international settings and among national governments.

This is also reflected in the fact that the EXPO 2008, which will take place in the Spanish city of Zaragoza from 14th June to 14th September this year, has been entirely dedicated to the question of sustainable use of water.

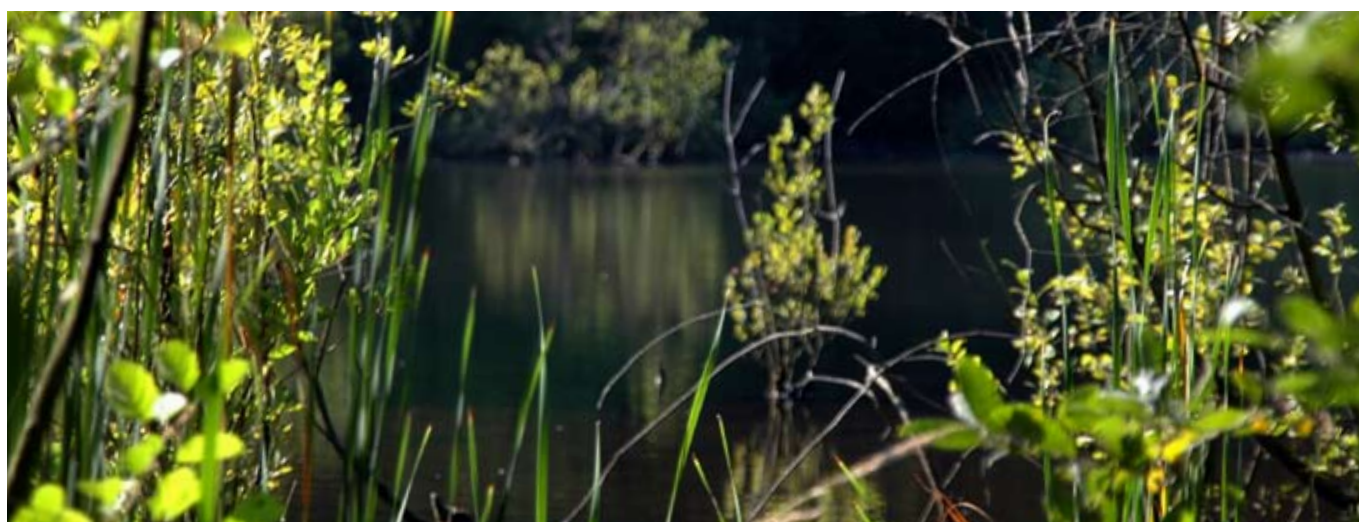
During the three months of the EXPO, more than 100 countries and international institutions will showcase innovative ideas and policies in the field of water. The European Union will also be present with a pavilion of which a significant part will be dedicated to water and agriculture. And to stress the importance of water in EU farming, a special conference on sustainable use of water in agriculture, which will be chaired by the Commissioner

for Agriculture, Mariann FISCHER BOEL, will take place on the 11th of July in the framework of the EXPO 2008.

Nowadays, ensuring a sustainable use of water in agriculture may be more paramount than when the first farmers in Mesopotamia began irrigating their fields. But that region's history also offers us a valuable lesson on the need to ensure sustainability. According to historians, unsustainable use of water in the irrigation systems around the Tigris and Euphrates basin led to the salinisation of the farm land in the 12th century, which subsequently became a factor in the collapse of the rich culture of Baghdad (known through the stories of Scheherazade and Arabian Nights). If we look at today's Iraq there is nothing left but the deserts and the myths of the once so fruitful lands.

■ Christiane KIRKETERP

The author is a member of Young Friends of the Countryside and works for the European Commission DG Agriculture. However, this article represents solely the views of its author and can not in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the Commission.



BOOK OF THE MONTH

Scenar 2020

Scenario study on agriculture and the countryside

The Scenar 2020 study aims at identifying future trends and the forces that will drive the European agricultural and rural economy in 2020.

Scenar 2020 provides a systematic review of the main variables that rural and agricultural policies must take into account - rural demographic patterns, agricultural technology, agricultural markets and the likely natural and social constraints on land use in 2020.

A reference scenario (baseline) taken from an analysis of trends from 1990 to 2005 was projected forward to 2020. This provided a basis for determining the most important long-term influences. It was assumed that economic, agricultural and envi-

ronmental policies may affect these trends and they were studied as a second set of influential factors. The relative importance of the policies can be demonstrated by comparing two alternative scenarios (liberalisation and regionalisation) with the reference scenario.

This scenario shows what might reasonably be expected to happen between now and 2020. The twelve-month study was carried out by the European Centre for Nature Conservation, Landbouw - Economisch Instituut, the Leibnitz-Zentrum für Agrarlandforschung, the Leibnitz Institut für Länderkunde, the Central European University and the European Landowners'



Organization. The study was reviewed in-depth by six independent experts at two workshops.

Diary Dates 2008

8 May, Brussels

ELO and ETI Business Lunch
"Cork - a key of sustainable development"
elo@elo.org

26 - 28 May, Bonn

UN Climate Change Conference on Biological Diversity, with the stand of ELO member Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Grundbesitzerverbände E.V.
www.plaza-der-vielfalt.de

29- 30 May, Warsaw

Conference «Globalization, Energy and the Environment» continuing an experience of

previous events organized by the Warsaw School of Economics and University of Washington to evaluate impacts the globalization might have on natural environment and global environmental policy.
www.sgh.waw.pl/gec2008

30 May, Wroclaw

ELO and Federation of Union of Agricultural Employers- Tenants and Land Owners of Lower Silesia Conference "Future of Agriculture- special focus on NMS"
elo@elo.org

3 - 6 June, Brussels

Green Week "Sustainable use of natural resources (waste, sustainable consumption and production)
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/home.html>

14 June - 14 September, Zaragoza

International Exposition on Water and Sustainable Development, with special exhibition such as water and energy
www.expozaragoza2008.es



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