

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE. ACHIEVING GOOD WATER QUALITY

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The aim of the 2000 Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to achieve by 2015 good water quality for all waters across the European Union. Under the directive Member States are obliged to adopt River Basin Management Plans by the end of 2009. What are the Member State's progress to date in adapting their legislation and putting in place the structures for good water management. The reports submitted by all 27 Member States show that significant progress has been made. However, they also indicate a number of shortcomings. One of these is the inappropriate transposition of the directive into national law and another is the considerable lag by a number of Member States in incorporating economic instruments into water management systems.

Cooperation on cross-border issues such as water pollution between Member States and countries like Russia and Turkey also needs to be improved.

There are also two other related Directives. The first is about Urban Wastewater treatment facilities for municipalities over a certain size. They found that only 51% of all treatment plants in the European Union – before enlargement in 2004 – met the standards under that directive. The second is one of the Nitrates Directive, which aims to reduce and prevent nitrate pollution from agricultural sources in surface water and groundwater. The implementation of that directive remains incomplete in a number of Member States and the pollution trends vary considerably across the European Union.