

STATUS OF WATER BODIES

WATER 1

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2000/60/EC requires surface water and groundwater bodies to maintain or achieve good status or good potential by the end of 2015 with a possible postponement of the deadline to 2021 or 2027. Achieving this objective requires the implementation of measures defined in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), which are reviewed every 6 years.

The main objective of the WFD is to achieve, by 2015, the good ecological and chemical status (or good potential^[1]) of surface water bodies (WBs) and the good chemical and quantitative status of groundwater bodies. The ecological status is assessed on the basis of biological indicators (macroinvertebrates, diatoms, fish and macrophytes)², physico-chemical indicators (oxygen balance, pH, nitrogenous and phosphorus matter³, specific pollutants⁴, etc.) and hydromorphological indicators⁵ (continuity of the water course, nature of the banks, etc.). Since 2014, the chemical status of surface WBs has been assessed in Wallonia by taking into account the environmental quality standards for 45 priority substances from Directive 2013/39/EU⁶. The chemical status of groundwater bodies is assessed on the basis of the quality standards and threshold values (25 substances) listed in Annex XIV of the Water Code.

2015 targets not achieved in Wallonia

The assessments carried out on surface water bodies for the period 2010-2015 indicate that 41% of these WBs (146/354) have a good or very good ecological status⁷. As regards chemical status, methodological changes do not allow conclusions to be drawn at this stage of the assessment⁸. The problems are mainly located in the Scheldt river basin district and in some of the sub-basins of the Meuse (Sambre, Meuse upstream, Meuse downstream and Vesdre) where anthropogenic pressures are higher. The factors that explain the bad condition of WBs are mainly related to domestic and service activities (insufficient waste water treatment), agricultural activities (nitrate, pesticides) and industrial activities. Approximately 61% of groundwater bodies⁹ (20/33) evaluated over the period 2009-2013 are in a good state, although 45% of them (9/20) show local degradation¹⁰. The bad state results from pollution by

nitrate and/or pesticides (11 WBs)¹¹ and other macropollutants (ammonium, phosphorus) (2 WBs). Agriculture is therefore the main source of diffuse pressure on groundwater in Wallonia, although other sources should not be overlooked (households and services and, to a lesser extent, industries and historical pollution¹²). The objectives set in the first RBMPs¹³ were therefore not met. Taking into account the programme of measures, the second round of RBMPs¹⁴ includes new targets for 2021: 58% (205/354) of surface water bodies with a good ecological status and elements justifying an extension of deadlines for 42% (149/354) of WBs for their ecological status and 95% (335/354) of WBs for their chemical status (for technical, economic or natural reasons¹⁵); 67% (22/33) of groundwater bodies in good chemical state and postponed deadlines for 33% (11/33) of groundwater bodies. There remains a significant gap between the objectives set by the WFD for the ultimate deadline of 2027 and the current state of water bodies in Wallonia.

[1] For artificial or heavily modified surface water bodies | [2] → WATER 3 | [3] → WATER 5 & WATER 6 | [4] → WATER 8 | [5] → WATER 9 | [6] Directive 2013/39/EU amends Directive 2008/105/EC and will apply fully from 22/12/2018. | [7] → Map 24 | [8] Directive 2013/39/EU imposes stricter standards, and analysis of new substances, than Directive 2008/105/EC. Not all analytical methods for new substances have yet to be developed and not all substances have been analysed in all water bodies. This is why chemical status is undetermined for many water bodies. | [9] → Map 25 | [10] SPW - DG03 - DEE & DEMNA, 2016 | [11] 5 in the Scheldt district, 6 in the Meuse district | [12] One of the groundwater bodies is considered to be in a bad state due to past or current industrial activities. | [13] RBMPs 2009-2015; 51% (182/354) of surface water bodies in good or high ecological state and 70% (23/33) of groundwater bodies in a good state at the end of 2015 | [14] RBMPs 2016-2021; → WATER 21 | [15] When the time of soil-aquifer transfer or ecosystem recovery is very long, e.g.

Fig. WATER 1-1 Status of surface water bodies in Wallonia (2010-2015)

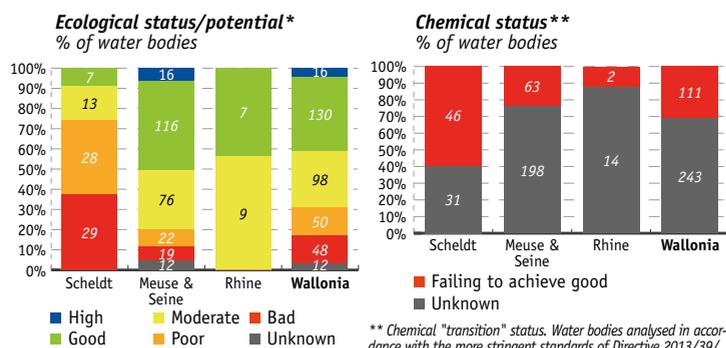


Fig. WATER 1-2 Status* of groundwater bodies in Wallonia (2009-2013)

