

PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC DRINKING WATER

The production and distribution of drinking water is a major issue in terms of public health (food, hygiene, etc.) but also an environmental issue since this water is extracted from natural resources (surface and ground-water) before being discharged into the environment after use (with or without treatment).

Relatively little change in abstractions

In 2014, the total volume of water abstracted in Wallonia for public distribution was 381.1 million m³. The volumes abstracted decreased by about 930,000 m³ per year on average between 1986 and 2014. The distribution of extracted volumes between surface water and groundwater may vary from year to year. On average, 80% of water volumes are extracted from groundwater¹, which is generally of better quality and can be made drinkable at lower cost. However, when groundwater levels are no longer satisfactory, as is sometimes the case during droughts, water producers are forced to pump more surface water.

Walloon waters supply Brussels and Flanders

Over three fifths of abstractions (62.9%) are made by Walloon producers² and the rest by a Brussels producer (VIVAQUA) and a Flemish producer (FARYS, formerly TMVW). Ultimately, just under 40% of the volumes of water produced in Wallonia are exported to the Brussels and Flemish regions. The balance of 236 million m³ is used for drinking water in Wallonia³.

A drinking water network in good status

An assessment of the general status of the Walloon distribution network can be made using various calculation methods. The 'water losses per mains length' index is one of these. This index provides an indication of the volume lost over one kilometre of pipes in a day. The lower the index,

the better the state of the network. "Losses" are either the volumes used by distributors to clean their installations and/or by civil protection and fire departments, or lost through leaks in the network, or simply not counted by water meters (malfunctions). It is not currently possible to quantify the volumes for these various losses. In 2014, the "water losses per mains length" index for Wallonia⁴ was estimated at 5 m³/(km.day), compared to 3 m³/(km.day) in Flanders⁵ and 9 m³/(km.day) in Brussels⁶. Significant investments⁷ have been made by the sector to renew pipes and connections.

Securing water supply

A Regional Water Resources Scheme been drawn up in Wallonia in order to anticipate certain water supply problems and secure the Walloon population's access to drinking water⁸. This has made it possible to identify the current and future Walloon water needs, as well as the extent of the available resources. In particular, it provides for the implementation of synergies between operators and greater use of dams in water supply.

[1] → Map 11 | [2] 50 as of 01/01/2014 | [3] → HOUSE 3 | [4] According to AQUAWAL (DEMNA calculations) | [5] According to VMM, 2015 | [6] According to HYDROBRU, 2016 | [7] €130 M/year on average between 2010 and 2014 | [8] SWDE, 2014; → WATER Focus 2

Fig. RES 3-1 Water abstractions for public distribution in Wallonia

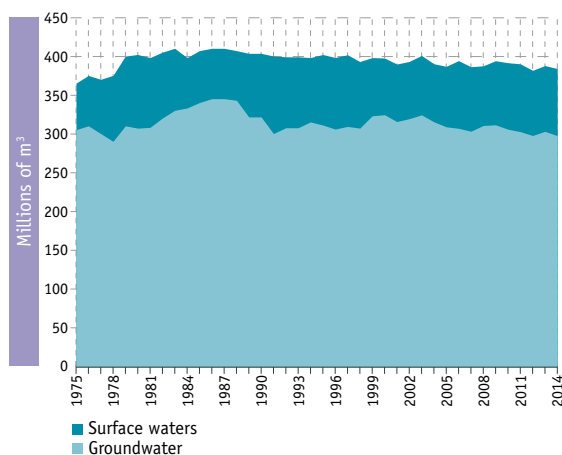


Fig. RES 3-2 Volumes of drinking water produced in Wallonia (2014)

