



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

ENVIRONMENT

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
25.06.10

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MEUSAC Core-Group discusses the Water Catchment Plan



The MEUSAC Core-Group met this morning to discuss the Draft Water Catchment Management Plan (WCMP) for the Maltese Islands.

Officials from MEPA and the Malta Resources Authority first gave a presentation outlining the main features of the EU's Water Framework Directive and then delved deeper in Malta's Water Catchment Management Plan.

Members of the Core-Group then had time to make comments and ask questions to the officials present. Comments ranged from the process of treating sewage water, to detailed analysis of systems of water catchment in domestic homes and industry, among others.

The Plan is required by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) which is considered to be one of the most important pieces of legislation about water produced by the European Commission in the past 20 years. It was introduced in 2001 with the aim of being the main driver for the sustainable management of water in the EU and its member states in the years to come. Water is not a commercial product like any other but, rather, a heritage which must be protected, defended and treated as such. Thus the purpose of the WFD is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and ground water. It would thus lead to the prevention of further deterioration as well as to protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems. It requires that all inland and coastal waters reach at least good status by 2015. Good water quality will contribute to securing the drinking water supply for the population. The WFD promotes sustainable water use based on the long-term protection of available water resources and aims at enhanced protection and improvement of the aquatic environment, through specific measures for the progressive reduction and phasing out of discharges, emissions and losses of priority hazardous substances.

What is the Water Catchment Management Plan?

The WFD requires the establishment of a Management Plan for each Water Catchment District. A water catchment district is an area of land where water from rain drains into a body of water such as groundwater, inland surface water and coastal waters. The plan gives details of all the water bodies in the area, the environmental objectives established for those water bodies and the measures that will be adopted to achieve them.



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MEPA and MRA are currently consulting on the WCMP. The consultation can be found at:
<http://www.mepa.org.mt/topic-waterpc>

MEUSAC will shortly be organising a consultation session on the WCMP. Members of Sectoral Committees will be invited as well as the general public. More information to be released in the near future.



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Commission requests Malta and 9 other member states to comply with Environmental EU legislation

The Commission is requesting ten Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Portugal, Latvia, Finland, Poland, Malta and Slovakia) to comply with EU environmental legislation in five different areas, namely prevention of floods, electrical and electronic equipment waste, water policy, management of environmental noise and landfill waste sites. The cases fall into three different categories:

- non-communication – the failure to adopt EU legislation at national level;
- non-conformity between national legislation and the requirements of EU legislation; and
- bad application - failing to properly apply the requirements of EU legislation.

Nine of the Member States now have two months to respond to the requests, which take the form of 'reasoned opinions' under EU infringement procedures. In the case of Malta, the deadline to respond is one month. In the absence of satisfactory responses from the Member States concerned, the Commission may refer them to the EU's Court of Justice.

Noise Directive – Malta

The Commission has decided to request Malta to fulfil its obligations under Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. Malta has failed to draw up strategic noise maps. The Noise Directive sets out a common approach to avoid, prevent or reduce the harmful effects of exposure to environmental noise. Under the Directive, Member States are to measure environmental noise (using a standard methodology and standard indicators) and draw up strategic noise maps for major urban agglomerations, roads, airports and railways.

More info:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/832&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

For current statistics on infringements in general see:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/implementation_en.htm