



# Water governance across Europe in light of the review of the WFD

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EurEau

# Overview

- ~ Who we are
- ~ Water governance
- ~ Water services governance
- ~ Cost recovery and polluter-pays principles
- ~ Improving water governance



# 1. Who is EurEau?

## **EurEau**

the voice of  
Europe's  
Water sector  
since 1975

## **Our members**

are the  
national  
water  
services  
associations  
from 29  
European  
countries

**We  
represent**  
public and  
private  
drinking  
and waste  
water  
services

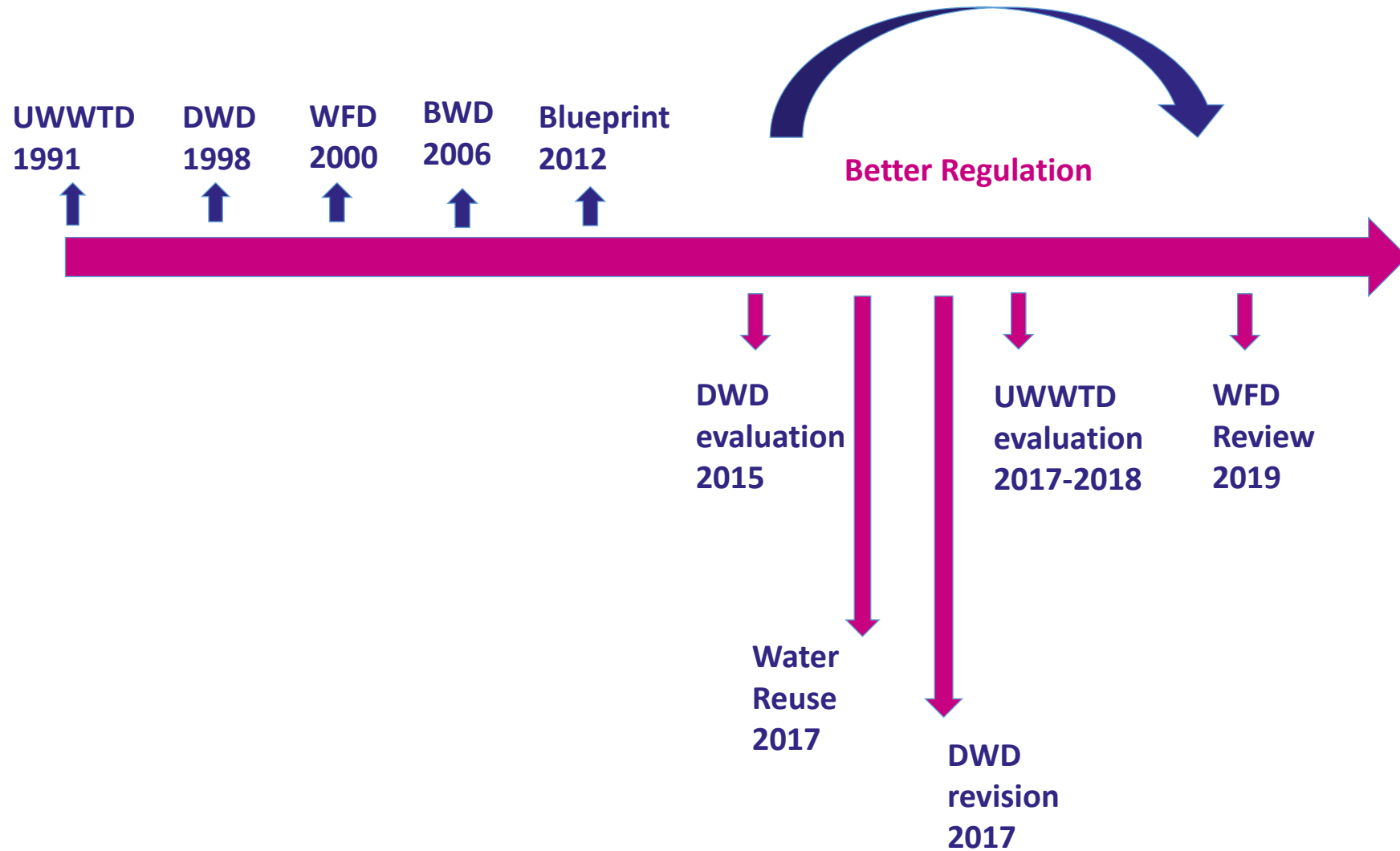
## **Employing**

**542,000**  
people,  
the sector  
makes  
a significant  
contribution to  
the European  
economy

# 1. What do we do?

- ~ We provide a **network** for our members to share **knowledge** and ideas, exchange **best practices**, analyse common problems and **develop effective solutions**.
- ~ We **highlight the fundamental role that water services play** in society. We develop positions of the water sector at EU level and we **engage with EU policy makers** to respond to the challenges shared by our members.

# Water Policy - timeline



## 2. Water governance

- ~ Water governance describes the legislation, policies, regulation and institutional frameworks and best practice related to the management of water resources
- ~ Water governance encompasses three essential inter-related elements:
  - ~ transparency,
  - ~ accountability
  - ~ stakeholder engagement.
- ~ A wide range of effective water governance rules are already in place at the EU and at Member State level.

## 2. Water governance

- ~ Water governance in the EU is **enshrined in the WFD** that introduced the management of water resources at the level of **water basins** leading to **transboundary cooperation** between national authorities
- ~ At national level the governance of water resources is the **competence of water basin management authorities** (national/regional/local authorities)
- ~ Water services represent **only one** of the players that interact with, and are regulated by, the competent authorities to deliver good governance of water resources

# 3. Water Services Governance

- ~ Drinking water and waste water services are carried out by **water operators**.
- ~ Water operators are fully committed to delivering strong water governance and, through EurEau, they are **signatories to the OECD Principles on Water Governance**
- ~ Water services are services of general interest and the **way they are managed** is subject to **subsidiarity** (Protocol 26 annexed to the EU Treaties)



# 3. Water Services Governance

- ~ Whether the services are carried out by **public** or **private** utilities is a choice of Member States
- ~ Whatever the management system, regulation by the competent authority **ensures** that **water services comply** with EU water policy **obligations**
- ~ The WFD objective is to achieve good status of water bodies in Europe
- ~ Sustainable **drinking water** services rely on **non-deterioration** of water quality and the **achievement of good status**
- ~ But water services play also an **important role** in reaching this very objective **by treating waste water**

## 4. Cost recovery and polluter pays principle

Art.9 WFD:

- ~ «MS shall take into account the *principle of recovery of costs of water services, including environmental and resource costs, having regard to the economic analysis [...] and in accordance in particular with the polluter pays principle*» [...]
- ~ MS shall ensure «an *adequate contribution* of the different water uses, disaggregated into at least *industry, households and agriculture* to the recovery of the cost of water services based on the economic analysis [...] and in accordance in particular with the polluter pays principle» [...]

## 4. Cost recovery and polluter pays principle

- ~ Today water services in nearly all Member States recover the **operational** and **investment costs** through the water **tariffs**
- ~ EurEau and the OECD support the **3Ts** (tariffs, taxes and transfers) approach that brings **clarity** to the cost recovery principle
- ~ Again water services are **only one** of the players in water governance and we need all other stakeholders to take responsibility for their impact on the aquatic environment and bear the relative costs

# Water governance in the review of the WFD

- ~ Improving water governance in the EU would mean:
  - ~ Full implementation of the cost recovery principle
  - ~ Implementation of the «source control» approach and the «polluter pays principle»
  - ~ More transparency of roles and responsibilities of each actor involved in the water governance
  - ~ Better stakeholders' engagement
  - ~ Better synergies across all EU policies (CAP, Pesticides, Nitrates, WFD, Priority substances)
  - ~ Better coherence between WFD and the «water industry» Directives (DWD, UWWTD, BWD)

# Thank you for your attention

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