

Report on the 5th meeting of the Intergroup Water, 30 June 2010

“Water and agriculture: a common future”



The attendees and speakers were welcomed by the President of the Intergroup MEP Dr. Richard SEEBER who said that agriculture and water have a close relation as up to 70% of the abstracted water in Europe is used by the agricultural sector. Speakers were Mr. Bulhao Martins on behalf of COPA-COGECA and Mr. Doornbos on behalf of EUREAU. The meeting was well attended with over 70 participants among which 8 MEPs and representatives of a wide range of stakeholders.

Mr. Bulhao Martins stressed that for sustainable water management in agriculture in the future, a focus needs to be put on voluntary and cooperative water management improvements, incentives, support for innovation and advisory and training. He insisted that access to adequate water supply at affordable prices is essential, especially in view of climate change. Cost-effective and locally tailored solutions with a high level of acceptance by farmers have to be found.

Mr. Doornbos said that EUREAU supports the development of a European Common Agricultural Policy that ensures a combination of an economically viable agricultural sector with improved sustainability of agricultural practices, especially in the field of water management. He called on all involved stakeholders to take a cooperative approach in designing the most effective and efficient policy that will bring mutual benefits.

During the Q&A session MEP Ayala Sender and MEP Rosbach raised issues about the reuse of water, cross compliance and cost calculations. Andrea Tilche of DG Research focused on research, new technologies and the spread of best practice across Europe to tackle diffuse pollution occurring from agriculture. He announced that he wants to work in partnership with stakeholders to boost innovation.

PRESIDENT:

Richard SEEBER (EPP)

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Judith MERKIES (S&D)

Holger KRAHMER (ALDE)

Satu HASSI (Greens)

Robert STURDY (ECR)

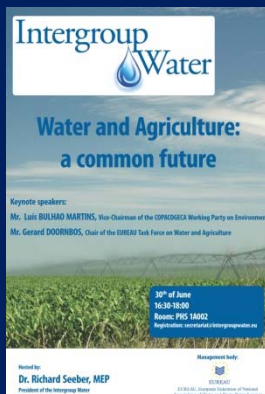
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Water and Agriculture – EUREAU's vision

Gerard DOORNBOS

Thank you for the opportunity to present EUREAU's vision on the relation between water and agriculture in the light of the upcoming reform of one of the EU's most important policies, the Common Agricultural Policy.

First, let me briefly give you some information about our organization. EUREAU represents the European drinking water and waste water sector. Its members are the national drinking water and waste water organizations from almost all European Union member states and members of the European Free Trade Association. It represents over 70.000 utilities that together serve over 400 million customers. EUREAU relies in its work on its extensive network of experts from its member organizations

Today, in this meeting of the Intergroup water, I am happy to be able to present to you our vision on the relation between water and agriculture and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. In short, EUREAU supports the development of a European Common Agricultural Policy that ensures a combination of an economically viable agricultural sector with improved sustainability of agricultural practices, especially in the field of water management. In this presentation I will further discuss the principles that we see as necessary to achieve this objective and I am looking forward to the opportunity to discuss our ideas with you afterwards.

First of all, it is of the utmost importance that we realize and acknowledge that there is an undeniable relation between agriculture and the water sector. Both rely on the need for sufficient water resources that are of good quality. At the same time, we should also realise that in addition to the many benefits that agriculture brings to society, there are strong pressures it brings on the water system, both in terms of quality and quantity. The pressures of agriculture bring serious challenges to water operators and need to be addressed. Water quality objectives of the Water Framework Directive are directly influenced by agricultural practices. Still, for example, many pesticides and nitrates are found in ground water and surface water bodies in concentrations that are far exceeding European limit values. Certain chemical substances, mainly used in agriculture as pesticides, such as Glyphosate, Mecoprop or Diuron, remain to create great problems for drinking water treatment, resulting in higher drinking water prices for consumers.

With regard to water quantity, there are enormous challenges, mostly in southern Europe. Reinforced by climate change and droughts, unsustainable water abstraction by agriculture for irrigation purposes creates water scarcity problems with far reaching consequences for the water sector, the agricultural sector and for society in general.

The realization of the interdependence of our sectors and the existence of pressures should be the starting point from which we should engage in discussions on policy development. In our discussions we should be open, respect each other's interests and situations and be willing to



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jointly look for solutions. This is why we are here today, to bring forward our ideas and start the dialogue.

Again, I repeat our vision on the reform of the CAP: an economically viable European agricultural sector with improved sustainability of agricultural practices.

We have seen in the past years a great development of the European agricultural policy. Before, this policy was mainly based on the support of agricultural production, and has had many benefits for the development of Europe's agricultural sector. However, times and priorities have changed and society is making demands on a European policy that makes up a very substantial part of the EU budget. Society not only demands security of food production, but also wants the agricultural sector to perform other tasks and to perform these tasks in a way that is sustainable for the environment.

A transition is taking place that agriculture is being required to perform services like public environmental goods and to become the custodian of the countryside. Such services, like the protection of water quality, prevention of droughts or floods, and the fight against climate change demand a European response because of their cross border nature. The CAP should be adjusted to play a key role in this.

Much progress has already been made in the 'Health Check' of the CAP, in which water management and climate change have been identified as key challenges. Now is the time to further develop these issues and make them an integral part of the agricultural policy, as it will be demanded by society.

An important element of how EUREAU sees the future of the CAP is to distinguish between normal food production and the provision of public goods. EUREAU supports to keep in place direct payments to farmers for food production, linked to a well defined and enforced cross compliance, for which the administrative burden for farmers should be minimized. A part of the direct payments however, should be reserved for payment of the performance of above legal measures to give more incentive to increase sustainable farming, or for the performance of public goods. As public goods are valued by society but not sufficiently remunerated by the market, public payments for them are required.

In addition, in areas with natural handicaps, which make farming difficult or economically unfeasible, but where abandonment is undesirable, payments should be made through rural development policy. Rural development policy should also be designed to support measures by farmers with regard to specific regional or local functions, such as for example groundwater protection or drinking water abstraction.

In the development of such structures for support of farmers, the rationale should always be to search for mutual interests for both farmers and the water sector. The key is to come to measures that benefit both sectors and most important, that are effective and efficient. This can only be achieved through mutual understanding and cooperation.

Another important element for EUREAU of the financial support from the CAP is that it as much as possible directly benefits the farmer. EUREAU realizes that in the current economic



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climate farmers are facing enormous challenges. Financial incentives will drive the development of above legal requirements, without neglecting the polluter pays principle.

Furthermore, EUREAU promotes to create continuity in measures for farmers. Farmers and other organizations then can decide more thoroughly about the length of the contract. Contracts for periods of 10 – 15 years should be possible. In current practice projects often end after three or four years and then the farmer falls back to 'old practices' because of a lack of continuity.

As mentioned earlier, rural development needs continued support and should not focus on generic measures for all farmers throughout Europe, but should be targeted at measures with regard to specific local or regional circumstances. Local / regional areas should be able to be designated to perform special functions, such as groundwater protection or drinking water extraction. Farmers should be rewarded for performing activities that benefit these specific functions in such areas. National co-financing should stay in effect for such measures.

Of great importance for EUREAU in the reform of the CAP is policy integration. This means that in the development stages of the reform, which have already begun, other policy areas should be invited to be closely involved. There are significant effects of the agricultural policy for, amongst others, environment, climate change, public health, regional policy and research – and vice versa. To achieve a future CAP that is effective in achieving an economically viable agricultural sector, which is sustainable and will have the support of society at large, an integrated policy development is essential.

To conclude, EUREAU stresses that it is essential that EU policy looks forward to the future and shows consistency. Different directives and regulations should be designed and implemented in a coherent framework, as such the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the CAP must be reconciled. By accepting the pressures on the water quality and quantity, the importance of the agricultural sector and recognizing the change in attitude towards this sector from the general public, a win-win situation can evolve from finding mutual benefits between the water sector and the agricultural sector. EUREAU calls on all involved stakeholders to take a cooperative approach in designing the most effective and efficient policy that will bring mutual benefits.

Thank you for your attention.



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 CONFEDERAÇÃO DOS AGRICULTORES DE PORTUGAL


Water and Agriculture: a common future?

Luís Bulhão Martins,
 Copa-Cogeca (Confederação dos Agricultores de Portugal)




Intergroup Water, European Parliament 30 June 2010, Brussels

Outline




- I. Water in agriculture
- II. Climate change – impact on water
- III. Water in the Common Agricultural Policy
- IV. Perspectives for the future




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I. Water in agriculture (1) Context

- **Production of agricultural products** is inseparably linked to **water supply** with seasonal variations in the need
- Most of European agriculture is **rain fed**
- The implementation of the **WFD has and will continue to have an impact** on water related investments and current management practices
- **Agriculture** has always been **affected by water excess or scarcity**







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I. Water in agriculture (2) Context

- **Balancing water supply and demand at local level** is crucial and needs the collaboration of many stakeholders
- **High groundwater recharge** under agricultural land
- **Water industry** is a **key partner** to secure supply of high quality water for crops and livestock





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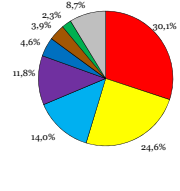
I. Water in agriculture (3) Some figures

Just 3% of the earth's water resources is **fresh water** and only 1 % of this is available for human activity including agriculture


6.7 % of European agricultural land is **irrigated**, this land is more productive

France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are accounting for to 90% of the total irrigated area in the EU 27 (corresponding to 9,15 million ha)

On irrigated land the yields and the value of the agricultural products are **particularly high** (in Spain: ratio 1:4 between land used and value)

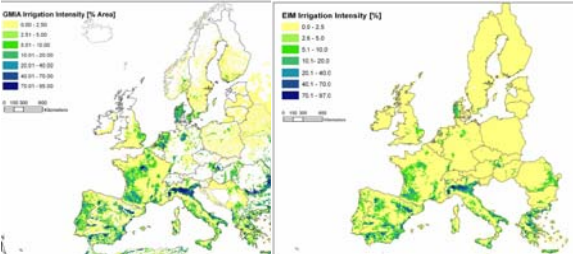


Country	Percentage
Spain	30.1%
France	24.6%
Italy	14.0%
Portugal	11.8%
Germany	4.6%
Denmark	3.9%
Others	2.3%
Germany (estimation)	8.7%




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I. Water in agriculture (4) Some figures




surface equipped for irrigation irrigated surface %

Wriedt et al. (2008): Water requirements for irrigation in the European Union



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II. Climate change (1) A key challenge in farming



Farmers are **adapting their management decisions** to the changing climate **on a regular basis**


Uncertainties exceed adaptation capacities of the single farmer

Farmers have to be economically viable to be able to cope with climate change

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II. Climate change (2) A key challenge in farming



Agriculture has to face many other challenges:

- imbalances in the food chain
- volatility of the markets
- rising global food demand
- demand for bioenergy


Climate change impacts water quantity and quality

-> risks of lower yields and bad product quality with negative impacts on farmers income

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II. Climate change – impacts on water (3)




European farmers are adapting and will continue to adapt to:

- rising average temperature with **higher evapo-transpiration rates**
- increased frequency and severity of **extreme weather conditions**: floods, droughts, hail, torrential rains
- **a growing risk of yield losses** due to
 - **pests / diseases** -> e.g. more insects in dry summers, fungi development under wetter conditions
 - **precocious ripening** of crops due to a lack of water

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II. Climate change – impacts on water (4)



The water cycle can be positively influenced by using adapted agricultural practices, but only up to a certain degree


Access to adequate water supply at affordable prices is essential if European agriculture is to continue to deliver

- social
- environmental
- and economic benefits

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III. Water in the Common Agricultural Policy



Regulation 73/2009 (direct payments)

New standards for water (annex III, Good agricultural and environmental conditions)

Issue	Compulsory standards
Protection and management of water: Protect water against pollution and run-off, and manage the use of water	- Establishment of buffer strips along water courses (latest 2012)
	- Where use of water for irrigation is subject to authorisation, compliance with authorisation procedures

Regulation 74/2009 (rural development)


Obligation to integrate new challenges in the RD programs, including as options

- water management
- innovations linked to water management

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IV. Perspectives for the future (1) Sustainable Water management in agriculture means



Adapt water needs for agriculture by

- * increasing water use efficiency
- * changing cropping patterns
- * using adapted production methods

Securing the water supply for agriculture by

- * reducing water losses in transport to the field
- * increasing moisture in the soil
- * using alternative water sources

Improving water protection by

- * increasing nutrient use efficiency and reducing run-off
- * increasing pesticide use efficiency and reducing losses
- * using new technologies and innovative approaches

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IV. Perspectives for the future (2)

Sustainable water management in agriculture

Solutions
allowing higher production while

- using less water
- improving use efficiency for nutrients
- minimizing losses of nutrients and pesticides

are a **future priority** for European agriculture

⇒ **crucial to find the right balance between benefits and costs**

Ensure long-term economic viability of farming while providing consumers with high quality food, environmental and landscape services

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IV. Perspectives for the future (3)

For sustainable water management in agriculture it is necessary ...

- to put a focus on **voluntary and cooperative water management improvements**
-> e.g. partnership with the water industry
- to give **incentives** to farmers for measures targeting **water quality and water quantity**
- to give **support for innovation**, making use of **new technologies**
- to provide **advisory and vocational training** to improve **knowledge skills on improved water management**

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IV. Perspectives for the future (4)

For sustainable water management in agriculture it is necessary ...

- to take into account that **water availability and demand for agriculture have to match**
- to tackle **competition for land use and water demand**
- to **consider societal demands** concerning agricultural production, environmental aspects, social aspects
- to build **understanding among stakeholders and policy makers** of the magnitude of the challenges that European agriculture has to face

⇒ **Cost-effective and locally tailored solutions with a high level of acceptance by farmers**

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Thank you for your attention!

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