

# Challenges and added value of public participation: lessons from European Water Policies

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- Public Participation in water related decision-making:
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- Challenges and lessons for implementation of Public Participation requirements



# Approaches to European Water Policies

## Background

### **The EU approach** - EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

- Common principles and overall framework for action
- Integrated, coherent and harmonized framework for river basin management for:
  - Environmental objectives, water legislation and policy and management
  - All significant management and ecological aspects
  - All water resources, water uses, functions and values
  - Foresees a wide range of measures
  - Involves stakeholders and civil society in decision-making
  - Water management is based on river basin approach and includes also river basins shared among Member States
- In longer perspective, further develop the overall principles and structures for protection and sustainable use of water
- Achieving the “good status” in a defined timeframe (by 2015)



# Approaches to European Water Policies

## Background

### The Water and Health Protocol (in force since August 05)

- Protection of human health and well being by better water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases
- Adequate supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone, effective protection of water used as a source of drinking water
- Obligation to establish national and local targets for:  
the quality of drinking water,  
quality of discharges,  
performance of water supply  
and waste-water treatment and  
to reduce outbreaks  
and the incidence of water-related  
diseases



# Approaches to European Water Policies

## Background

### The Water and Health Protocol (in force since August 2005)

- Close linkages between human rights, health, environmental protection and sustainable development
- Access to information and public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environment and health is an important principle
- Requires public participation in target setting and their revision
- Compliance mechanism – access by public
- A legally binding instrument for the UNECE region, bridging EU and other European countries to achieve the same policy goals

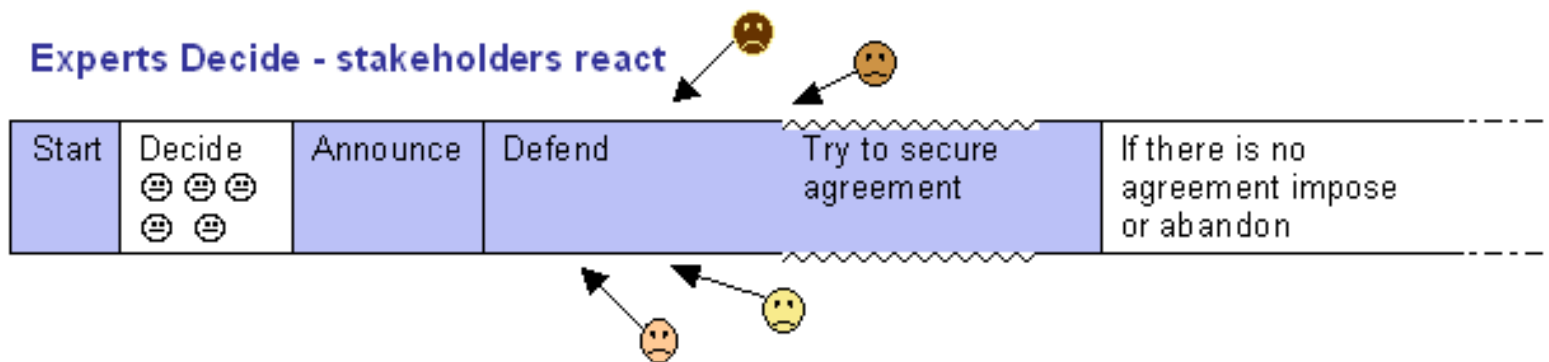


# Public Participation in water related decision-making

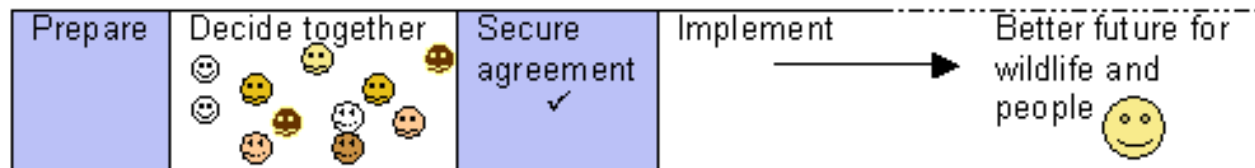
- Public participation in decision-making related to water issues accepted as a basic principle and right in Europe
- Right based approach:
  - Opportunities and rights for the public to influence the decision-making process and the outcome from an early stage
    - Aarhus Convention, related national and EU legislation
- Pragmatic approach:
  - Focusing on practical approaches of stakeholder involvement/public participation facilitating and influencing decision-making
- **Types of decision-making: decision-making on specific activities, policies, planning and legislation**
- **Also governed by other relevant international agreements, EU and national legislation including the Espoo Convention, the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**



# OLD vs. NEW PP Approach



## Collaborative/consensus building processes



# Swift in Attitude



<b>They are the problem</b>	<b>We are all part of the problem</b>
<b>They are a drain on resources and get in the way</b>	<b>They are an asset and we need to work together</b>
<b>Focus on science or technical knowledge</b>	<b>Many forms of knowledge needed and used</b>
<b>Telling others what to do</b>	<b>Listening with an open mind</b>
<b>Push others to change</b>	<b>Works with others to agree change</b>
<b>Formal approaches</b>	<b>Informal approaches</b>
<b>Our ideas</b>	<b>The best ideas</b>
<b>Experts</b>	<b>Partners</b>





# Added value: The difference participation makes

- Well informed decisions
- Lasting change
- Ownership
- Real problems addressed
- Avoiding or managing conflict
- Reduced Costs
- Changed relationships
- Improved reputation
- Mutual learning
- Good social capital for next challenge



# Challenges and lessons for implementation of Public Participation requirements

- Proper national legislation in place including laws and regulations, clear and detailed procedures
- Practical mechanisms for implementation
  - Clear roles and responsibilities
  - Guidance materials and other aides
  - Cooperation and coordination among authorities and institutions
  - Integration and coordination of information flow
  - Specific centres/units to facilitate public access for information
  - Facilitating public involvement
    - Specifically trained officials
    - Mechanisms for regular consultation e.g. councils, forums, advisory or working groups with public/NGO /stakeholder representation

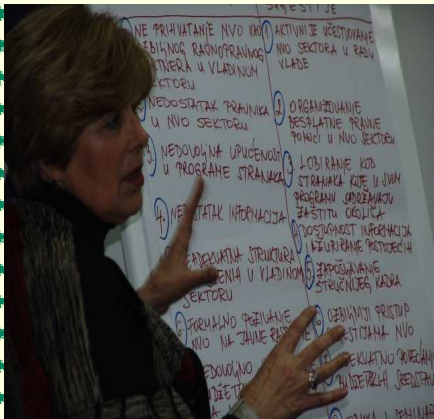


# Challenges and lessons for implementation of Public Participation requirements

## Planning effective public/stakeholder involvement

- Successful communication and public involvement is ongoing process, not a one-time event
- Setting steps to go through to achieve the ultimate goal
- Early planning of ways to communicate and involve the public or intended audience
  - Understanding the situation, planning and designing the process:  
Preparing/discussing a public participation plan

- Decision-making process – for different phases
- Target groups to reach
- PP, information and communication activities
- Channels to reach out to target groups
- Timing
- Human, financial and time resources



# Challenges and lessons for implementation of Public Participation requirements

- Differing practices across countries and within countries
- Good practice examples and mechanisms, partnerships exist
  - Regular and ad hoc consultative bodies for NGO/stakeholder involvement
  - Draft documents are put on web for comments
  - Active invitation of interested NGOs and space for open process
  - Ministries, agencies establish departments or units responsible for relations with the NGOs and stakeholders
  - NGOs organized to participate and provide feedback, comments
  - Nomination/delegation of NGOs and stakeholder representatives to decision-making and consultative bodies – electing/selecting own representatives



# Challenges and lessons for implementation of Public Participation requirements

- Developing institutions - institutional support and capacity
  - Capacity building for officials, NGOs and other stakeholders
  - Developing and sharing good practices
  - Providing assistance in methodologies and techniques
- Resources for supporting access to information and public participation (human, technical, financial)
- Regional, national and local level coordination and cooperation to support implementation of public participation (ICPDR Public Participation Expert Group and a network of officials and NGOs, EU WFD Implementation Support)



# Thank you for the attention!

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