

A pair of hands is shown from a top-down perspective, cupped together and holding a quantity of water. The water is clear and glistening, with many small bubbles and reflections of light. The hands are a natural skin tone. The background is a solid, deep blue color. The overall image conveys a sense of care, protection, and the precious nature of water.

Sanitation in the European Union

World Water Forum Istanbul
European Regional Session – The way forward in the 21st century

Helmut Blöch, European Commission



**Diversity of
regions and
their waters**



Historical development since the 19th century



- **Increasing urbanisation**
- **Increasing industrialisation**
- **Increasing public health risks**



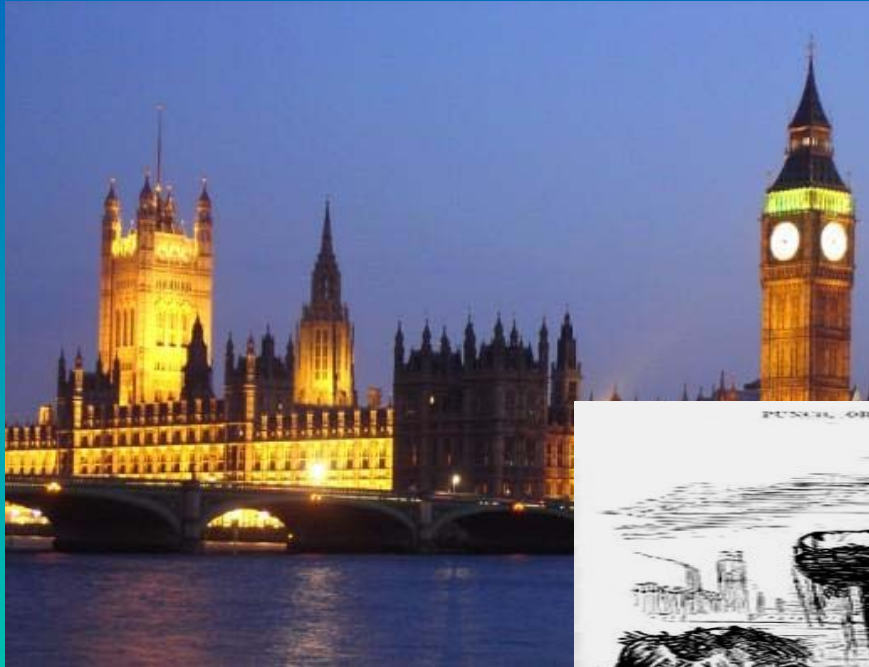


typhoid

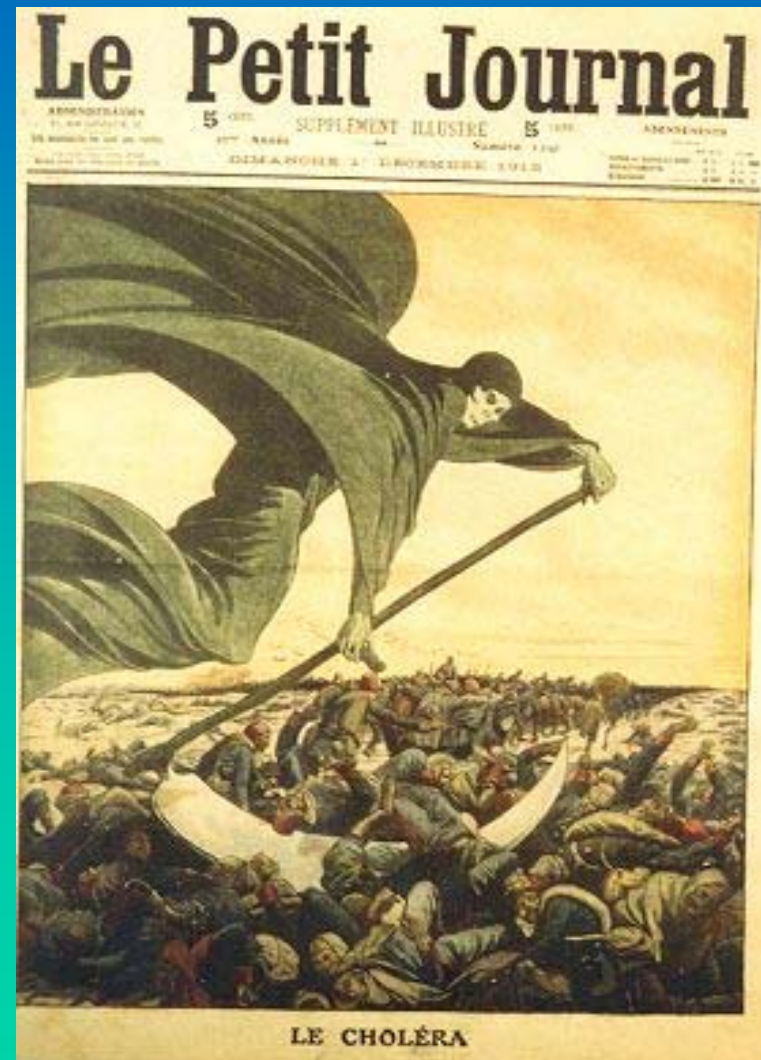
cholera



London – The Great Stink



Brussels, Hamburg, Paris, . . .



European Union policy



- **Constitutional principles in the Treaty**
 - Environmental protection aiming at high level of protection
 - Precautionary principle
 - Principle of addressing pollution at the source
- **Environmental legislation**
 - Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
 - Water Framework Directive & Daughter Directives
 - Drinking Water Directive
- **EU funding tools**
 - under Cohesion and Regional Policy;
 - EU research programmes

Needs and framework for achieving safe sanitation



- **Good governance and encouragement of action at local and regional level**
- **Financial support tools, from data collection to involvement of citizens to planning and operational measures**
- **Further research and exchange of knowledge and experience**
- **Policy objectives and orientations for protection of health of citizens and the environment**

Water Framework Directive



- **Protection of all waters (rivers, lakes, coastal waters and groundwaters)**
- **Obligation to achieve good water quality as a rule by 2015; values on nitrate in groundwater = drinking water value**
- **Plans and programmes for achieving good quality due by Dec 2009, drafts due by Dec 2008**
- **Good governance: information and consultation of citizens, local municipalities, NGOs - mandatory for the development of the plans and programmes; forthcoming European Water Conference to present in particular efforts and progress on public participation.**

European Water Conference

Brussels 2-3 April 2009



<http://www.ewc2009.eu>
webstreaming coverage during and after the event

Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive



- **applies to settlement areas >2000 inhabitants*);**
- **minimum standards for waste water treatment: secondary treatment as the rule, plus additional nutrient removal in the catchment of waters with eutrophication problems;**
- **fully flexible on the means to achieve the objective, thus open to - and encouraging - innovation and alternative solutions;**
- **alternative solutions to centralised sewerage systems permitted even in urban areas, if same level of environmental protection is achieved.**

*) smaller settlement areas covered by the objective of the Water Framework Directive ('good quality for all waters, as a rule by 2015')

Drinking Water Directive



- **applies to drinking water supply systems for >50 people or supplying >10 m³ per day**
- **health-oriented quality standards (microbiological and chemical parameters)**
- **obligation to regularly monitor drinking water quality and to inform citizens about the quality of their drinking water**

Achievements and gaps (1)

Large rivers – from the 'sewers of Europe' in the 1970s to home again to the salmon



Achievements and gaps (2)

Groundwaters currently not in line with 'good status'

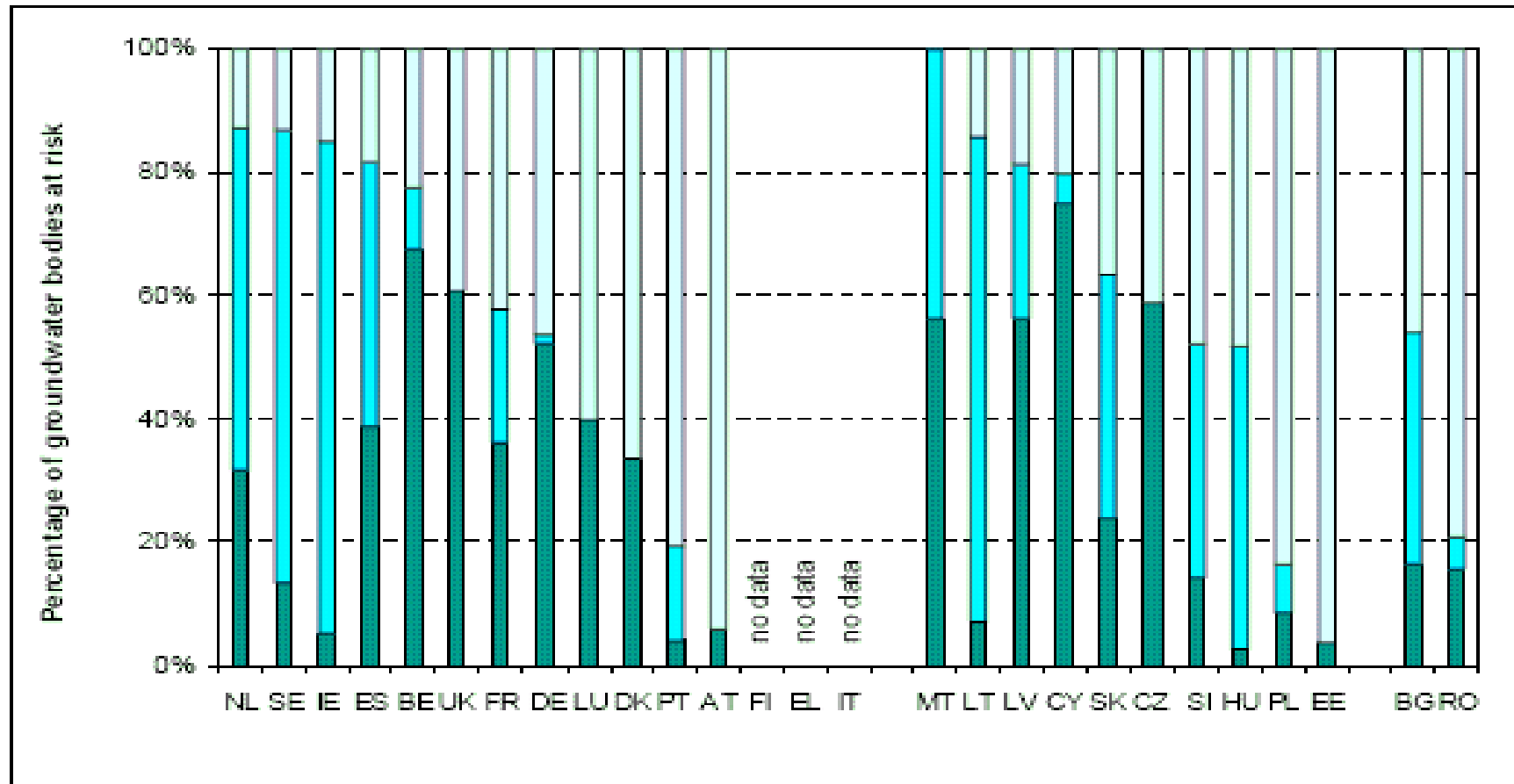


Figure 7: Percentage of groundwater bodies at risk of failing WFD objectives per Member State - ■ = 'at risk', ■ = 'insufficient data', ■ = 'not at risk' (based on data reported by Member States).

Achievements and gaps (3)

Surface waters currently not in line with 'good status'

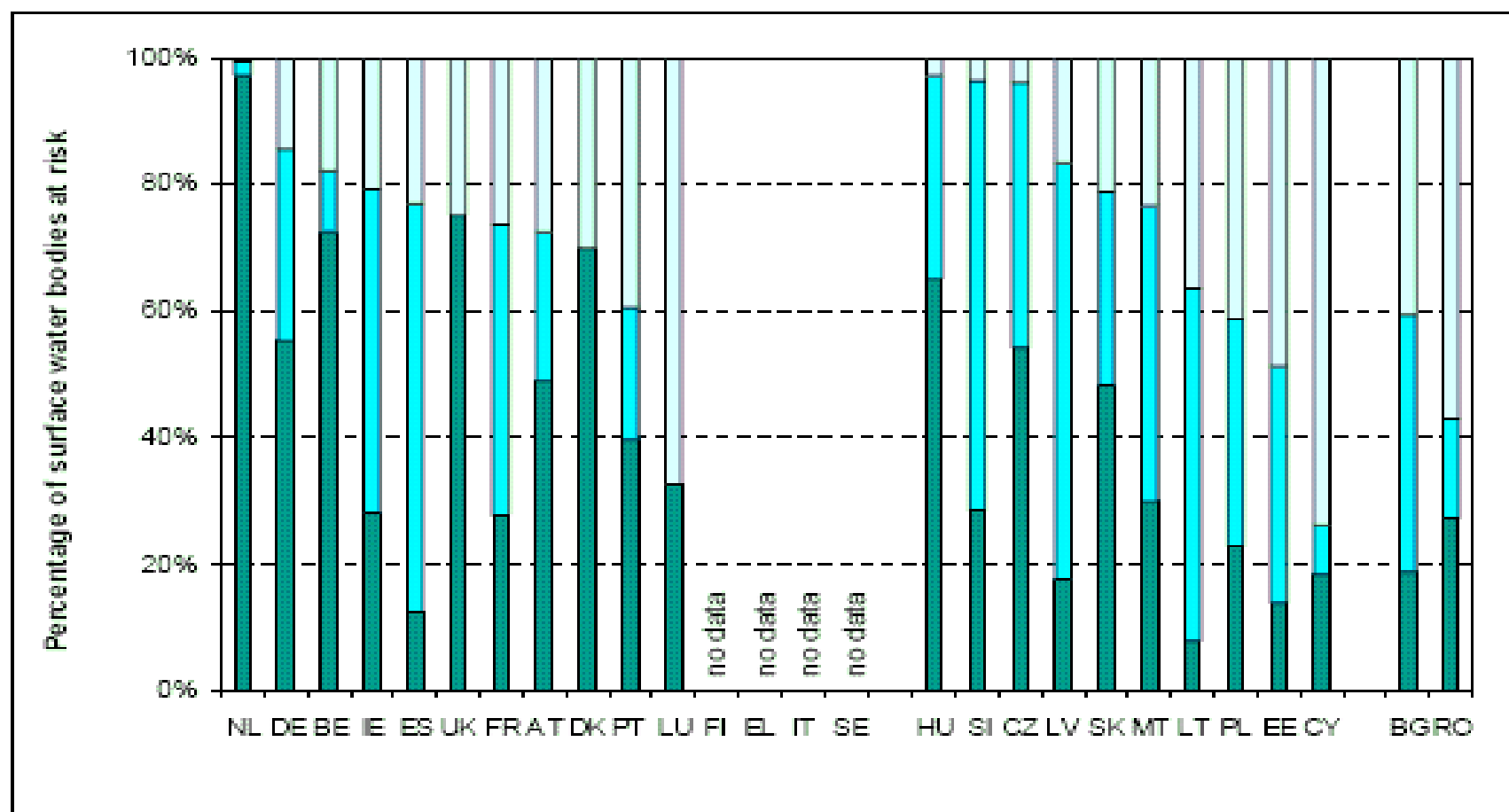
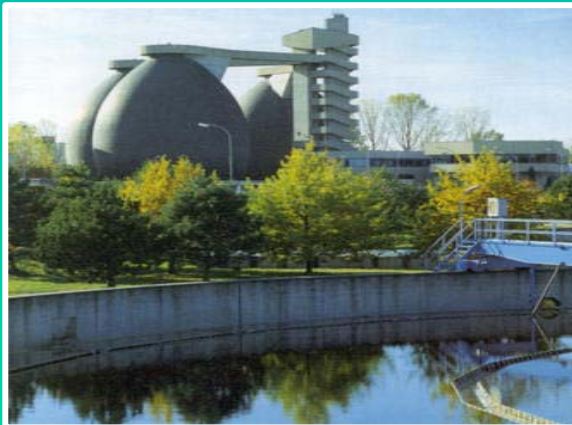


Figure 6: Percentage of surface water bodies at risk of failing WFD objectives per Member State - ■ = 'at risk', ■ = 'insufficient data', ■ = 'not at risk' (based on data reported by Member States).

Achievements and gaps (4)



- 'Old' Member States: implementation of the UWWTD to a considerable extent, but visible gaps as well; positive example inter alia Austria, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands.
- 'New' Member States in Central & Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean (accession 2004/2007): clear commitments and obligations, with transition periods as a rule staged until 2015.



The way forward: sound policy objectives and good governance



- **European water policy has established a sound basis for long-term technical, financial and political decisions, for all involved from the local to the European level;**
- **Challenge will be to make available instruments work, for the benefit of the people involved and affected, and with them;**
- **Safe and affordable sanitation for all will require more efforts – better common understanding, changing attitudes by all, and practical solutions in the field. Reconsideration of priorities and (current) traditions will be required;**
- **Window of opportunity for water & sanitation-related projects as part of financial incentive packages: 'no regret measures'**



Thank you for your attention.

Your involvement, your experience will be crucial if we want to succeed.

Source (graphics): OVGW
This contribution reflects the views of the author and not necessarily those of the European Commission.



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