

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DROUGHT

A. INTERNAL EU DROUGHT RELATED POLICIES

1. Overview of the EU policies regarding drought

Soil, land degradation and drought related policies are all interlinked and have recently received much attention in internal EU policies.

Next to the “Thematic Strategy for soil protection”²⁸, the Commission recently adopted a *Communication on Water scarcity & droughts*²⁹ which proposes a number of orientations to address and mitigate the challenge posed by water scarcity and drought within the EU.

Droughts have been recognised as a major natural hazard. Recently, a joint study by the European Commission and Member States estimated that the cost of droughts over the last thirty years in Europe was at least 100 billion Euros.³⁰

Moreover, studies on regional climate change predict increased occurrences of drought situations throughout Europe during the next few decades, caused by shifts towards raised air temperatures, modified distribution of rainfall with dryer summers and wetter winters and in particular, towards increased variability, with increased likelihood of extreme climatic events³¹. This initial set of policy options that address the challenges caused by climate change include measures that are directly relevant for drought mitigation such as:

- putting the right price tag on water
- allocating water and water-related funding more efficiently
- improving drought risk management
- considering new water supply infrastructures
- fostering water performance technologies and practices
- fostering the emergence of a water-saving culture in Europe
- and improving knowledge and data collection.

The implementation of the *Water framework directive*³² (WFD), the flagship directive on water policy, is a priority in order to address mismanagement of water resources which is a prerequisite for addressing the impacts of droughts.

Moreover, the WFD has all the flexibility to develop specific drought management plans in relevant river basins to supplement the river Basins Management plans.

2. Lessons learned and good practices / Trends and emerging issues

In relation to droughts and land degradation, the impacts of climate change have to be taken into account in planned policies and the recently adopted Commission Green Paper on adaptation to climate change underscores the problem of extreme events including droughts. Therefore in order to reduce the impacts of these events, efforts should be strengthened to properly address mismanagement of water. Land-use planning is one of the main drivers of water use and adequate allocations between economic sectors is key when addressing the issue of drought. In addition, the huge potential of water savings in Europe³³ must be fully explored and water saving must become a priority.

²⁸ Please see Chapter III, part A of this report for more information on this strategy.

²⁹ The full text of the communication is available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52007DC0414:EN:NOT>

³⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/scarcity_en.htm

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/pdf/comm_droughts/ia_annex.pdf

³² Directive 2000/60/EC, available at:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2000/l_327/l_32720001222en00010072.pdf

³³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/pdf/exec_summary.pdf

Member States have to prepare the River Basin Management Plans and associated programmes of measures for 2008 and adopt them by the end of 2009. It will be essential to assess the content of these plans and programmes and see the extent to which they help address water scarcity and drought issues.

However, a number of Member States have already prepared Drought Management Plans based on national requirements.

The Natural Hazard Action (WDNH) of the Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES) at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) is currently running a *European Flood Alert System* (EFAS) on the pre-operational basis (De Roo and Thielen 2004). Due to the increased need for consistent and timely information on droughts on the European scale, NAHA-IES is planning to set up a *European Drought Observatory* for drought forecasting, detection and monitoring, while benefiting from the existing expertise and data availability as well as the experience gained during the development of EFAS.

3. Case studies of a successful EU drought related practices

3.1. Case Study: European Drought Centre

1. *Problem or issue addressed*: the growth of drought in Europe, lack of co-operation of international scientists on drought and drought related issues
2. *Name of the programme*: European Drought Centre
3. *Timeframe*: 2004 -
4. *Status*: ongoing
5. *Main objectives*: to enhance European co-operation in order to mitigate the impacts of droughts on society, economy and the environment
6. *Lead institution*: it is an EU founded institution itself
7. *Other implementation arrangements and stakeholders involved*: European, international scientists
8. *The results achieved* (if possible, please address the social, economic and environmental impacts of the programme): see text below
9. *The relationship of the programme to internationally agreed goals and targets*: it contributes to the international fight against drought and desertification
10. *Link*: <http://www.geo.uio.no/edc/>

The European Drought Centre case study description:

The European Drought Centre was set up within the context of the Fifth Framework Programme.³⁴ This is a virtual knowledge centre, which promotes collaboration and capacity building between scientists and the user community and thereby increases preparedness and resilience of society to drought³⁵. It is a virtual knowledge centre with the aim to coordinate drought related activities in Europe to better mitigate the environmental, social and economic impact of droughts. The EDC promotes collaboration and capacity building between scientists and the user community and thereby increase preparedness and resilience of society to drought. The EDC will in particular:

- Work towards a better understanding of the drought phenomenon
- Act as a platform to initiate and discuss scientific progress on drought research within the academic society and be a meeting place between multi-disciplinary experts in drought research, policy and operational management
- Act as a forum for discussion on policy issues related to sustainable water resource management in a pan-European context, e.g. implications of the Water Framework Directive on low flow and drought management
- Liaise with international organisations and programs (e.g. UNESCO, WMO-HWRP, IAHS), EU framework programs, international river commissions and regional drought centres
- Work towards establishing a European Drought Watch System, focusing on drought forecasting and monitoring at the pan-European level
- Support the developing of national drought mitigation plans based on best practice guidelines.

³⁴ <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp5/about.htm>

³⁵ <http://www.geo.uio.no/edc/>

B. EXTERNAL EU DROUGHT RELATED POLICIES

1. The EU Water Initiative

The EUWI is a political initiative created to accelerate progress towards achieving water related MDGs and WSSD targets. It seeks to assist partner countries in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and priorities for the water and sanitation sector. The initiative should garner donor support, so that existing resources can be more effectively utilised and attract new resources to the sector to meet the specific requirements of individual developing countries and river basin organisations. The EUWI is not a financial instrument and its mandate will be carried out through the promoting of improved strategies, policies, programmes and practices, working within a framework of an integrated approach to the management of water so that available resources, both human and financial, are mobilised effectively towards improved access for the poor to safe water and improved sanitation.

The EUWI is being developed within four regions (Africa, EECCA, Latin America and the Mediterranean). The EUWI objectives³⁶ are:

- Reinforcement of political commitment to action and innovation oriented partnership
- Promotion of improved water governance, capacity building and awareness
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness of water management through multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination
- Strengthened cooperation through promoting river basin approaches in national and trans-boundary waters
- Identification of additional financial resources and mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing.

2. Drought and Disasters Risk Reduction

Natural disasters and catastrophes (drought, flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions etc.), negatively affect economic growth and development prospects in developing countries.

Donors have traditionally responded to these disasters with post-shock humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, but would welcome broader strategic approaches on shock/disaster planning, through ex-ante risk management strategies and investments on prevention.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities are of great importance and the Commission aspires to integrate them within the planning and design process for programmes and projects in countries or regions that may at some point be vulnerable to the deleterious effects of disasters that occur as a result of natural hazards.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) describes actions that seek to reduce vulnerability to disaster risks and enhance resilience of populations/structures/institutions/services at risk throughout every aspect of the disaster management (DM) cycle. These may include actions that:

- are proactive/pre-emptive prior to the existence of a hazard (threat)
- are undertaken during a disaster event
- comprise an emergency response in the immediate aftermath of disaster event, or
- provide risk reduction measures throughout the recovery phase through to normal operating conditions and the execution of (structural) poverty alleviation and sustainable development strategies.

The European Commission has committed itself to support DRR in its Communications: in the 2003 Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), in the 2005 Reinforcing EU Disaster and Crisis Response in Third Countries and in the 2005 European Consensus on Development. Since 1996 the Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission (ECHO) has been operating a disaster preparedness programme, the so-called DIPECHO. In 2005, within the 9th European Development Fund, the Commission launched the African/Caribbean/Pacific (ACP) - EU Natural Disaster Facility (NDF) that gained support and has just become operational.

³⁶ www.euwi.net

In addition to this, the EC contributes to Disaster Risk Reduction through a number of different interventions in various cooperation sectors, including food security, agriculture, water-sanitation, public health promotion, literacy, vocational training, education of handicapped children, reintegration of refugees and IDPs.

3. Lessons learned and good practices / Trends and emerging issues

Recently the Commission services have established programming guidelines that include an approach to DRR in the Country Strategy Papers (CSP) context. CSPs represent the framework (agreed with the beneficiary country) for EC assistance.

The guidelines suggested that for the DRR to be featured high on the list of CSP priorities, it would have to be a priority in the partner countries' respective poverty reduction plans and the agendas of the national authorities. The Commission services will maintain its efforts to influence its partners to incorporate these issues in the project identification processes and throughout programme implementation during the CSP cycle of 2007-13.

4. Case studies of a successful EU drought related practices

4.1. Case Study: MEDROPLAN

1. *Problem or issue addressed:* drought challenges in the Mediterranean region
2. *Name of the programme:* Mediterranean Drought Preparedness and Mitigation Planning
3. *Timeframe:* 2003-
4. *Status:* ongoing
5. *Main objectives:* to develop guidelines for drought preparedness plans and to set up a Network for drought preparedness in Mediterranean countries
6. *Lead institution:* The Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza is the coordinating agency. The project is funded by the European Union.
7. *Other implementation arrangements and stakeholders involved:* nine institutions from the MEDA countries Morocco and Tunisia and the EU countries Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain
8. *The results achieved* (if possible, please address the social, economic and environmental impacts of the programme): see text below
9. *The relationship of the programme to internationally agreed goals and targets:* it contributes to the international fight against drought and desertification
10. *Link:* <http://www.iamz.ciheam.org/medroplan/>

This project was funded through the MEDA water regional programme. Its objectives were to develop guidelines for drought preparedness plans and to set up a Network for drought preparedness in Mediterranean countries. Several Mediterranean countries were involved in the project and a number of advance training courses and workshops were organised for the programme.

Expected Products:

1. Drought Management Guidelines and accompanying documents (print and on-line products):
 - Drought management Guidelines. Paper, website and CD versions
 - Tutorial of the Drought Management Guidelines. Website and CD
 - Technical Annexes of the Drought Management Guidelines. Paper and pdf (downloadable from website and in CD) versions.
2. Drought Preparedness Network for the Mediterranean countries.

Project Achievements:

1. Improved understanding of drought, its causes and its social, economic and environmental effects
2. Methodological framework for risk based approach to drought management
3. Incorporation of science into drought management by education, awareness outreach
4. Analysis of the current know-how, technology, information and expertise built from extensive stakeholders' knowledge in drought management

5. Advanced training courses and workshops for institutional resource managers focused on urban and irrigation water management
6. Publication of the Drought Management Guidelines in 6 languages (final result of MEDROPLAN, in preparation).