



## Why are we asking for your opinion?

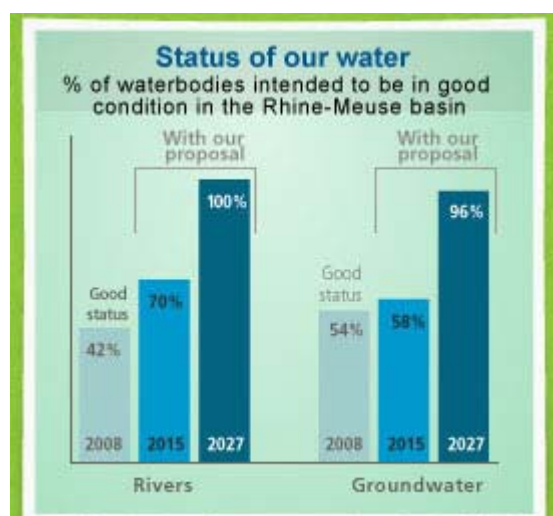
Because you use, dispose of, and pay for water. And you have a role to play in improving it. In short, you too are an actor in the issue of water. The national consultation on water is offering you the opportunity to inform and express yourself through a questionnaire regarding the decisions which will concern all of us over a 6-year period.

## What are our ambitions for 2015?

Water has no borders. In 2000, Europe set up a new single operational framework: the Water Framework Directive. The ambition of the Member States is to regain water quality by 2015. Three specific factors alone may cause this deadline to be missed: the time taken for completion of work sites, particularly difficult natural conditions, or an excessive cost of the work to be carried out. Based on application of these criteria, each basin committee makes a commitment on the percentage of water in its basin which will be in good status by 2015. The remaining proportion must achieve good condition by 2021 or, at the latest, by 2027.

## On what issues can you give your opinion today?

You can give your opinion on the masterplan and the programme of measures for 2010-2015 for your basin, in particular on the level of ambition and the suitability of planned actions.



## What kind of water in 2015 ?

Overall, our proposal leads to 20% improvement in the good status of water in our region's rivers between now and 2015. Good condition will be reached in full by 2027.

For groundwater, progress is slower. We propose an objective of regaining water quality which is more spread out over time.

The efforts of various parties (communities, public authorities, economic interests, agricultural interests, households) have, over the course of two decades, allowed half of water quality to be regained in the rivers of the Rhine-Meuse basin, that must be seen as a significant effort, considering the strong industrialisation and urbanisation of our basin.

We propose reaching together a new key stage in winning back our water, by setting a target of two thirds of rivers by 2015.



## At what cost ?

Investments over six years in the Rhine-Meuse basin amount to around 2 billion euros and are estimated at around 4.4 billion by 2027

Expenditure will be funded from taxes and private investments. The main impact on households will be seen in the water bill. The average price of water in the Rhine-Meuse basin may gradually rise to reach 3.22 euros per m<sup>3</sup> by 2015. The average increase in the price of water could be around 2 to 3 % per year.

## You and us at the heart of the process

### What is a « hydrographic basin » ?

Basins exceed regional borders and correspond in Metropolitan France to rivers and their tributaries. It is the territory which shares the same natural resources and in which all rain water flows and converges, through a network of rivers, finally discharging into the sea.

### What constitutes water in good status ?

Water in good status enables the perpetuation of human, animal and plant life. It contains no toxic elements. It is available in sufficient quantity for everybody.

### What is the SDAGE ? What is the programme of measures ?

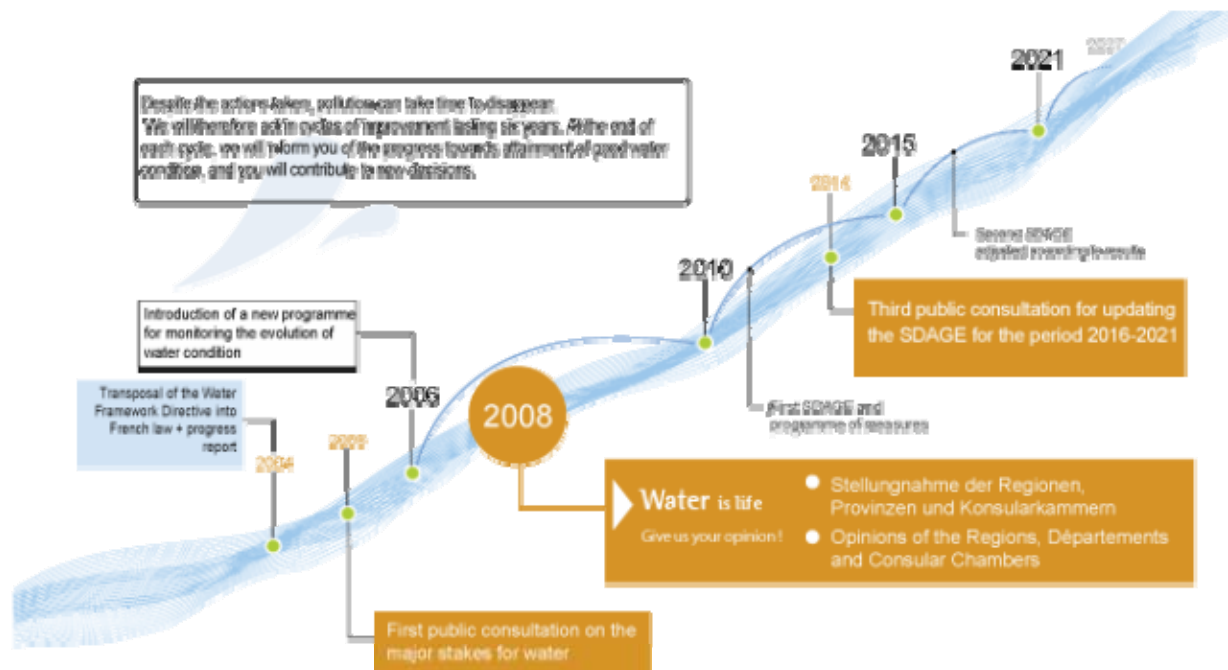
The "Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Eaux" (SDAGE - Masterplan for the development and management of water resources) is a document setting out the objectives for improvement in the quality of rivers and water over a 6-year period. It is drawn up by the basin committee.

The programme of measures, drawn up by the Prefect of the basin for the same period, contains the actions enabling attainment of the objectives set out in the SDAGE.

### What is the basin committee ?

It is made up of 100 local decision-makers including elected members of local authorities, business managers, representatives of the agricultural, industry, consumer organizations, for nature conservation, and civil servants. Its role is to design the SDAGE for the basin. It votes on water agency's programme of actions. It implements funding (fees and grant) within the framework established by the law. In Metropolitan France, there are seven major hydrographic basins with a basin committee and a water agency. A similar organisation exists in Overseas France.

The basin committee entrusted the water agency with the organisation of the public consultation process.



# Water & Health



## Pesticides are dangerous for living creatures

### Pesticides, research findings

Residues from pesticides and medicines resulting from human activity are present everywhere in water, groundwater and rivers.

Certain chemical substances, such as pesticides, are harmful in small doses and difficult to locate in water. They can affect the hormonal system of living creatures (including humans) and their

health (cancer, deformities, sterility, etc.).

### Protecting water means protecting nature !

Water runs from the tap. But where does it come from? From the earth. It is collected from groundwater and from rivers. It returns to the earth, to underground water and rivers after consumption. Drinking water must be protected in situ, in the environment.

# Water & Pollution control

## We produce more waste than nature and water are able to absorb.



We produce more waste than nature and water are able to absorb ! Reducing waste and polluting discharges in water, continuing to treat pollution of all kinds and all origins is an important objective.

### No pause for waste water treatment

Around 600 waste water plants exist in the communities of the basin, but a thousand small communes must upgrade their waste water network and around forty medium-sized urban areas still need to upgrade their urban wastewater plants.

### Toxic substances

We need to understand, reduce and phase out emissions of hydrocarbons, heavy metals, solvents, and other dangerous toxic substances.

Industry and small businesses can produce and use substances which are toxic. Eventually, companies will have to eliminate or replace the most dangerous substances. Individuals are also concerned, because some dangerous products are found in urban wastewater discharges.

### Pesticides: reviewing our practices

(cf. Water and Health challenges) Agriculture is a major user of these products, as are towns and villages. Railways, golf courses, individuals, professional and amateur gardeners also use them! A change of practice by the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors (communities, public authorities, individuals), support for sustainable and/or organic agriculture by the community and individuals, commitment by communities to no longer use pesticides, our decision to go natural in the garden, are key areas for action.

### Nitrates : don't stop

Fertilising substances containing nitrates improve crop yields, but an excess of nitrogen can remain when the crops do not absorb all the fertilizers used. In most cases, these are "washed away" by rain and carried into

underground water, making it unfit for consumption as drinking water. The agriculture has made efforts which have enabled stabilisation of nitrate content in the basin's underground water. This action must be continued and intensified.



## Water & Scarcity

**We have water, but it is wise to use it sparingly**

There is no shortage of water in the Rhine-Meuse basin, but in places it can be scarce. In the south of the département of Vosges, the main Lorraine groundwater body shows an imbalance in water. The climate can influence the environment, as it did during the great heatwave of 2003.

All the effects of climate change have not yet been seen. Water may become scarcer due to transfers of water from one place to another. For instance, water collected by sewers is discharged after purification far from the place it was collected to be distributed to taps. Economic activity can create disturbances in the natural water cycle. This was the case with mining activity in the basin. It will be necessary to save water in the future.

## Water & Spatial Organisation of territory

**Embankment of water can lead to catastrophes ! Too much concrete or tar causes water pollution.**

### **Coping with flood waters**



It is possible to guarantee our safety while also preserving "free" spaces for river water. This enables dispersal of the excess energy from high water levels, recharging of groundwater bodies, guaranteeing the safety of goods and people, and preserving good water condition.

Creating natural "buffer" zones against rising water levels is preferable to building structures (Dams, barriers). Certain structures can have harmful effects. They increase the strength of rising water downstream, resulting in catastrophes.

The impermeability of ground surfaces in towns (car parks, squares, etc.) leads to pollution when it rains and the transfer of polluted water. So-called "alternative" techniques exist. These allow infiltration of rainwater into the ground, which filters it and regenerates water resources without polluting them. Vegetation in towns (without pesticides) also has a highly beneficial effect on water and air quality and limits the greenhouse effect.

Reintroducing vegetation to the banks of watercourses is essential in order to protect river water quality and fauna.

# Water, Nature & Biodiversity

**Stop ! Nature and biodiversity are declining fast !**



Pike, freshwater crayfish, corn crakes (a type of bird) are living testimony to our safeguarded environment, our waters and associated habitats, which are reservoirs of biodiversity. Saving natural aquatic environments, rivers, giving them room, creating living spaces, providing migration paths for salmon and sea trout, means insuring life ! Currently, communities and angling NGO are restoring 300 to 400 km of watercourse vegetation in the basin per year; we need to progress to 500 km each year.

Wetlands (ponds, marshes, peat bogs, meadows, alluvial forests...) store excess water, which they then give back during dry periods, as well as storing carbon and limiting the effects of climate change.

Half of French wetlands have disappeared.

In the Rhine-Meuse basin, communities, public authorities and NGO's are currently restoring 300 to 400 hectares of wetlands per year. In addition, the same amount would need to be created simultaneously. Backfilling, ploughing meadows, poorly thought-out agricultural practices, rampant urban development, etc. are leading to the decline of nature, biodiversity and our life insurance! To achieve good water status, two joint actions need to be conducted: the fight against water pollution, and restoration of the natural functions of aquatic environments (rivers, wetlands) and their ecological diversity, which serves vital purposes (self-purification,

storage of excess water, storage of carbon, etc.). This is efficient and less expensive for the local community.

**Protecting water means protecting nature !**

## Water & Europe



**Several million of us live along the Rhine and the Meuse**

In the Rhine-Meuse basin, water flows towards the North Sea via several neighbouring European States. We therefore share the same water with our European neighbours.

We must act together to protect it.

**PLEASE GIVE US YOUR OPINION ON OUR PROPOSALS FOR WATER IN OUR REGIONS (RHINE-MEUSE BASIN)**

**We propose that two thirds of rivers and half of all bodies of underground water in our regions should be in good condition by 2015; which would mean, for the consumer, an average increase in the price of water by 2 to 3 % per year.**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Do not really agree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

**In addition to your answer to the above question, what do you think of the objectives to regain water quality proposed for 2015 ?**

- Achievable (the objectives will be met within the stated times)
- Unrealistic (the objectives will not be met within the stated times)
- Disappointing (we expected better, even if it was much more expensive)

**In addition to your answer to the first question, do you believe that the stated costs will be respected ?**

- Yes, they will be respected
- No, they will be exceeded
- No opinion

Are you prepared to pay more to protect water ?

- Absolutely
- Somewhat
- Not really
- Not at all

**A FEW ACTIONS WHICH COULD BE IMPLEMENTED**

**There now follows a series of more specialist questions. We invite you to refer to the proposals and information contained in the site to help you answer.**

***Water & Health - Water & Pollution Control***

**« Pesticides are dangerous for living creatures and the natural environment »**

**In order to reduce the use of pesticides globally and collectively and to help the development of organic agriculture, are you yourself prepared to consume more organic products ?**

- Completely prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not really prepared
- Not at all prepared
- No opinion

**Are you yourself ready to use fewer insecticide and herbicide products in your home and garden ?**

- Completely prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not really prepared
- Not at all prepared
- No opinion

**Are you yourself ready to support your commune in its «zero pesticide» campaign (ban of the use of pesticides) and accept a little wild vegetation, for example on footpaths, squares ?**

- Completely prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not really prepared
- Not at all prepared
- No opinion

### **Water & Scarcity**

**What do you yourself intend to do to save water ? (several answers possible)**

- Eliminating waste (favouring showers, taps with diffusers...)
- Choosing economic household appliances (washing machine, dishwasher)
- Collecting rainwater to spray the garden
- Encouraging my company to recycle water
- No opinion

### **Water, Nature & Biodiversity**

**« Wetlands (ponds, marshes, peat bogs) limit the effects of climate change and act as filters to regenerate water. »**

**Recreating wetlands means rebuilding natural spaces without construction or economic activity, resulting in potential loss of earnings for some people. Despite this, do you think it should be done anyway, for the good of us all ?**

- Completely prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not really prepared
- Not at all prepared
- No opinion

**« Rivers are living environments; fauna, particularly migrating fish, must be allowed to travel and reproduce »**

**Fish must be allowed to circulate in our rivers, even if this has an impact on electricity and water bills due to the funding of passing structures such as fishpasses on the rivers.**

- Completely prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not really prepared

- Not at all prepared
- No opinion

### **Water & Spatial Organisation of territory**

**« Floods need to be controlled by giving waterways room to be free and by controlling urban development. Constructing dykes to trap water can lead to catastrophes. »**

**No-built land must be preserved to allow flood waters to extend, even if this impedes the urban expansion and development of certain economic activities.**

- Completely prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not really prepared
- Not at all prepared
- No opinion

**What do you think of the following proposal : «retaining land to allow floodwaters to extend naturally» ?**

- Realistic
- Unrealistic
- No opinion

**« Too much concrete or tar causes pollution. We need to encourage the infiltration of rain water »**

**What do you think of the following proposal : «In future we need to limit the impermeability of ground surfaces in towns and cities (car parks, roads, shopping areas, etc.) in order to encourage the infiltration of water and reduce flooding, restore vegetation, green areas and more natural materials, even if this requires more maintenance and therefore an additional cost» ?**

- It is a good idea
- It is a good idea because it will also improve my environment
- It is a good idea because it will make the town look better and create jobs, and I'm prepared to pay a little more for that
- It is a bad idea because it hinders economic development and employment
- It is unrealistic. It will never happen
- No opinion

### **And to conclude the questionnaire**

**What do you think is the best way of questioning Europeans people in a consultation or informing them of its results ?**

- Internet
- Press
- Non-profit organizations
- Your letter box
- At the town hall



At the prefect's office

**Apart from the quality of drinking water, which interests the majority of European people, what are your main concerns in relation to water ? (tick 2 answers only)**



Fighting pollution from urban waste



Fighting pollution from industrial waste



Fighting pollution from pesticides and fertilizers



Saving water within the houses



Saving water within industrial activities



The quality of bathing water



Better maintenance of rivers



Better information on «who pays for what ?»

Do you wish to make any comments ?

### Personal information

Zipcode of your city ?

**Are you :**



a man



a woman

**Are you :**



under 25



26 - 35



36 - 60



over 60 ans

**What is your occupational category ?**



Farmer



Small business owner, trader, or company manager



Executive or non-manual professional



Employee or worker



Pupil or student



Retired



No occupational activity