

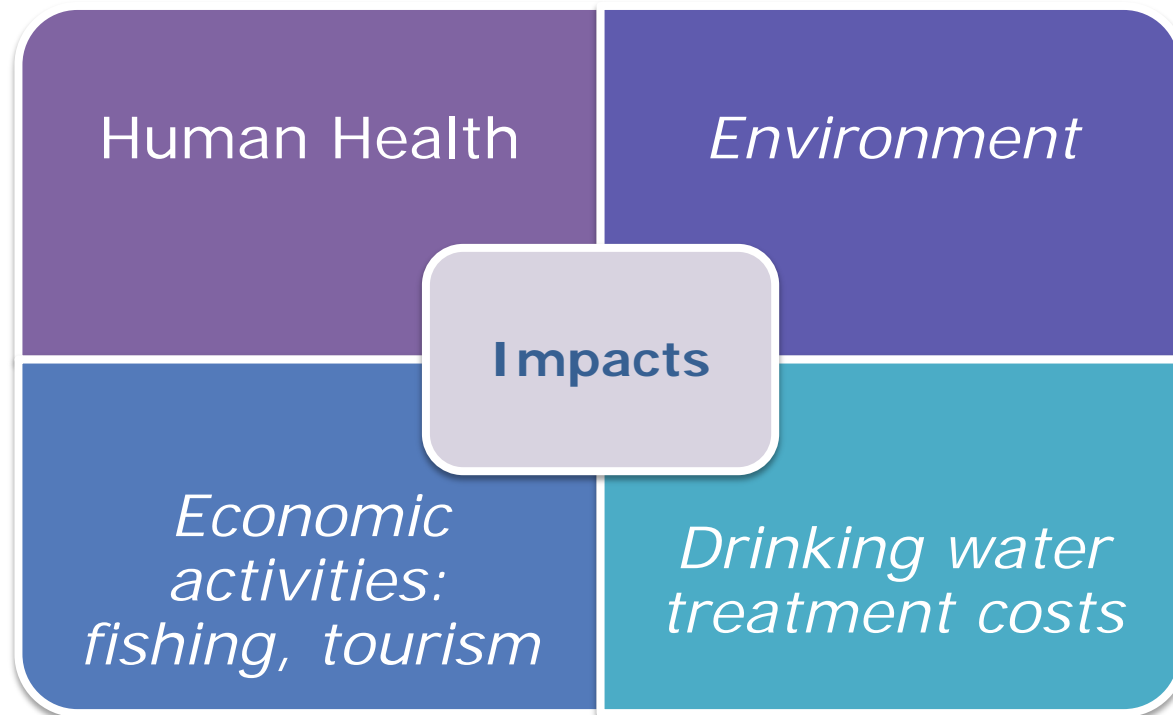


# EU Nitrates and Agriculture Policy

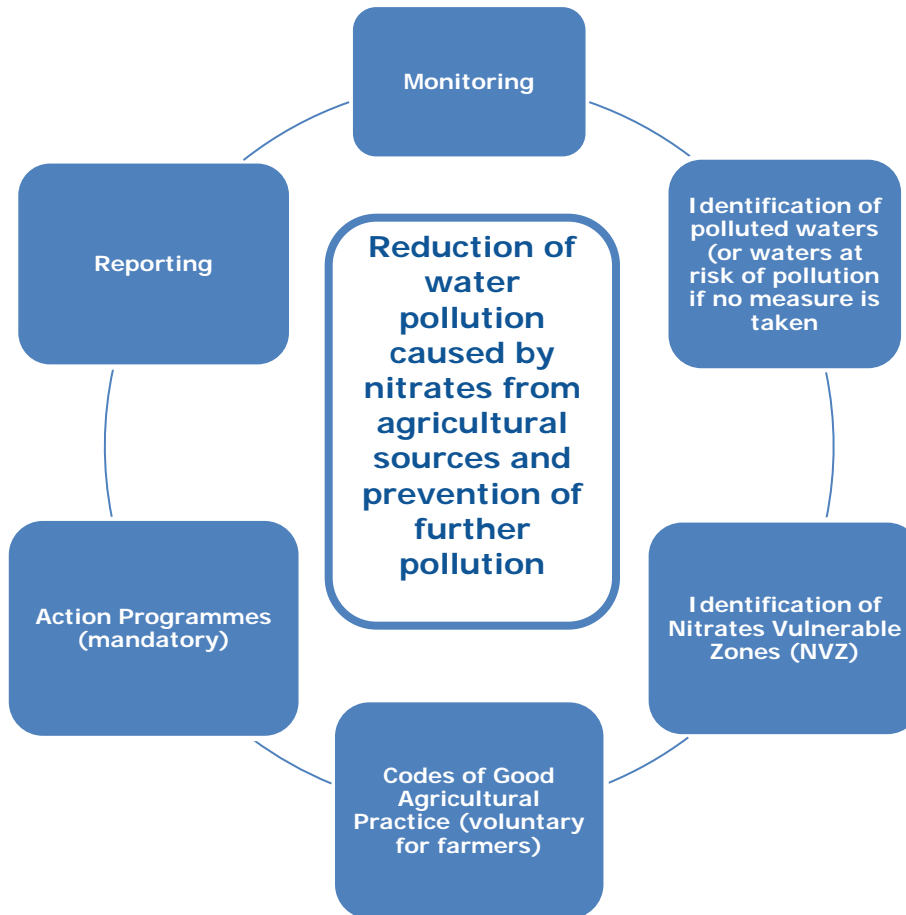
Conference on Agricultural Catchments Programme,  
Wexford, Ireland  
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DG ENV D 1 (Land Use and management)

# Impact of nutrients pollution



# Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)



# NVZ designation

- All known areas of land which drain into the polluted areas identified on the basis of the above criteria.
- MS must adopt an Action Programme (compulsory measures) on these NVZs
- Alternatively, MS can take a "whole-territory approach": not designating NVZs but applying the Action Programmes to the entire territory.



# Action Programmes (I)

- ❖ **MS must establish Action Programmes in their NVZs (or their whole territory if they opt for the “whole-territory approach”) that:**
  - a) render compulsory the measures of the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice**
  - b) must add the measures listed in Annex III of the Directive:**
    - 1. Periods** when fertilizer application is prohibited
    2. Capacity and construction of **storage** facilities for livestock manure that exceeds what is required for storage during the longest prohibition period

# Action Programmes (II)

## 3. Limitation of land application of fertilizer:

a) Should take into account soil, climatic conditions, land use and agricultural practice.

- European Court of Justice [ECJ Case C-293/16]: Action Programmes must take account of the best available scientific and technical knowledge, as well as the physical, geological and climatological conditions of each region.
- Recommendations for establishing Action Programmes under the Nitrates Directive, 2011,  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-nitrates/studies.html>

# Action Programmes (III)

**b) Be based on balanced fertilization** between :

- the foreseeable nitrogen requirements of the crops and
- the nitrogen supply to the crops from all sources (already present in the soil at the moment when the crop starts to use it, mineralisation of organic N in the soil, additions from manure and chemical fertilizers)

Respecting balanced fertilisation means protecting the environment and avoiding waste of nutrients.

**4. The amount of livestock manure applied to the land each year shall not exceed 170 Kg N/ha/year**

# Synergies with CAP

- In the CAP, the obligations of the Nitrates Directive constitute:
  - A Minimum Requirement that, if not respected, leads to a reduction of the direct payments that farmers receive (Cross Compliance)
  - The baseline to provide funding to farmers that participate in agro-environmental schemes: CAP can finance only measures that go beyond the Nitrates Directive obligations.
- However, one obligation (storage facilities) may be funded in two cases:
  - After the entry into force of a new obligation, in the first 12 months
  - For young farmers setting up for the first time in an agricultural holding as head of the holding, in the first 24 months





# Commission Report on the implementation of the ND (I)

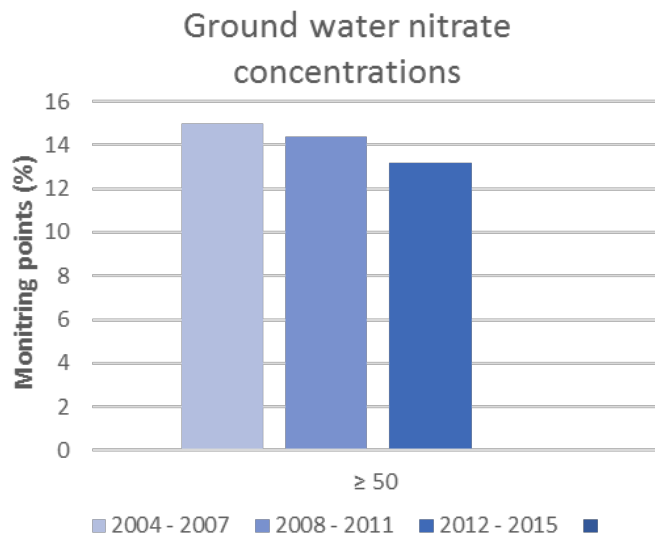
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-nitrates/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-nitrates/index_en.html)

- Published on 4.5.2018.
- Main Report (COM(2018) 257 final)
- Staff Working Paper (SWD(2018) 246 final)

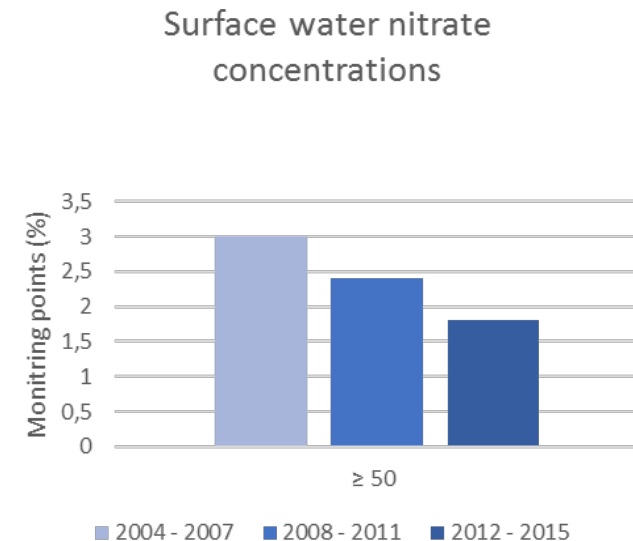
# Commission Report on the implementation of ND (II)

Water pollution caused by nitrates has decreased in Europe in the last two decades.

% of **groundwater** stations exceeding 50 mg/l nitrates



% of **surface water** stations exceeding 50 mg/l nitrates



# Commission Report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive (III)

## Fertiliser use (2012-2015, compared with 2008-2011)

Fertilizer nitrogen (ton/year)	10.960.532	4,10%
Fertilizer phosphate (ton/year)	1.133.009	5,90%
Manure nitrogen (ton/year)	9.214.272	-2,60%
Manure phosphate (ton/year)	1.609.966	-3,10%
Nitrogen balance (kg N/ha)	32,5	+0,75 kg
Phosphate balance (kg P/ha)	2	+0,2 kg



# Commission Report on the implementation of ND (IV)

- The ND has reduced pollution in Europe for the past two decades. However, despite the positive overall trend:
  - Nitrates pollution and eutrophication continue to cause problems in many Member States.
  - Agricultural pressures on water quality are still increasing in some areas, as some agricultural practices are heavily dependent on fertilizers that can cause local water quality to deteriorate
  - Several Member States and regions still have a high percentage of nitrate-polluted and eutrophic waters.
- Member States need to step up their efforts to bring the waters in the European Union to a good status

## Further efforts needed

- Measures should be adequately adapted to different regional pressures and hotspots.
- Need to support farmers with effective advice to select and implement the right measures
- Correct determination of nutrient excretion for more precise estimation of nutrient balances
- Manure processing to recycle and use nutrients and components of manure in more efficient way
- Improve synergies between the Nature Directives and the Nitrates Directive.
- Adaptation to climate change

# Importance of research

- Tools for strengthening water quality monitoring
- Common methodologies for assessing eutrophication
- Understanding the link between the nutrient residues in soil and the quality of the water
- Monitoring of long and short term effect of the measures in the action programmes
- Fertilization practices and soil quality
- Include greenhouse gasses and ammonia emissions
- Improve management of the nutrients' cycle
- Impact of climate change



European  
Commission

Thank you for your attention

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