

The use of policy appraisal and economic analyses in water management: comparing the WFD implementation in England and France, Blandine Boeuf

My PhD focuses on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in England and France. The WFD was adopted in 2000, with the objective to achieve good status and to prevent deterioration of water quality for all water bodies (lakes, streams, coastal waters and groundwater). I am particularly interested in the case of exemptions to the Directive: good status can be delayed or lowered if member states justify of adverse natural conditions, technical infeasibility or disproportionate costs. While exemptions can be seen as necessary to conciliate economic activities with water protection, they can potentially greatly undermine the WFD ambitions, if misused or overused. In this context, the issue of their proper justification is particularly critical.

However, the Directive and subsequent EU guideline documents are quite vague on the justification of exemptions, and particularly on the interpretation of disproportionate costs. This has led to great variations between member states as to the *method* used (cost-benefit analysis, ability to pay of stakeholders...) and as to the *political* ambition towards the WFD (i.e. the efforts made to achieve good status). Nonetheless, exemptions clauses are used extensively. In 2009, member states planned to delay the achievement of good status for at least 40% of their water bodies.

My work focuses on the use of exemption clauses in member states, and more particularly on the justification of disproportionate costs. I looked into the WFD negotiation process, in order to understand how provisions on exemptions were adopted and how the legislators originally interpreted them. I then focused on two case studies: England and France. I studied the economic analyses performed in both countries to support decisions on disproportionate costs. I also analysed the role of policy appraisal as a political instrument, serving member states strategies on exemptions.

Thanks to water@leeds, I was able to conduct interviews in Europe and to present my research to representatives of the Ministry of Environment in France, Water agencies and the Norwegian Environment Agency.

Related publications :

- Boeuf, B., Fritsch, O. Martin-Ortega, J. 2016. Undermining European Environmental Policy Goals? The EU Water Framework Directive and the Politics of Exemptions. *Water* 8(388)
- Boeuf, B., Fritsch, O. 2016. Studying the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Europe: a meta-analysis of 89 journal articles. *Ecology and Society* 21(2):19
- Feuillette, F., Levrel, H., Boeuf, B., Blanquart, S., Gorin, O., Monaco, G., Penisson, B., Robichon, S. 2016. The use of cost-benefit analysis in environmental policies: Some issues raised by the Water Framework Directive implementation in France. *Environmental Science & Policy* (57):79-85

