Europe’s State of Water

The need for improved water resilience

Milan Chrenko / 4 November 2025

EEA,2024

European Environment Agency

Europe’s State of Water 2024

Europe’s State of Water 2024: The need for improved water resilience

- Largest assessment on the health of Europe’s waters
- **Europe’s water is under significant pressure**, presenting serious challenges to water security, now and in the future
- Europe **urgently** needs to improve its resilience and **ensure sustainable freshwater supplies for people and the environment**

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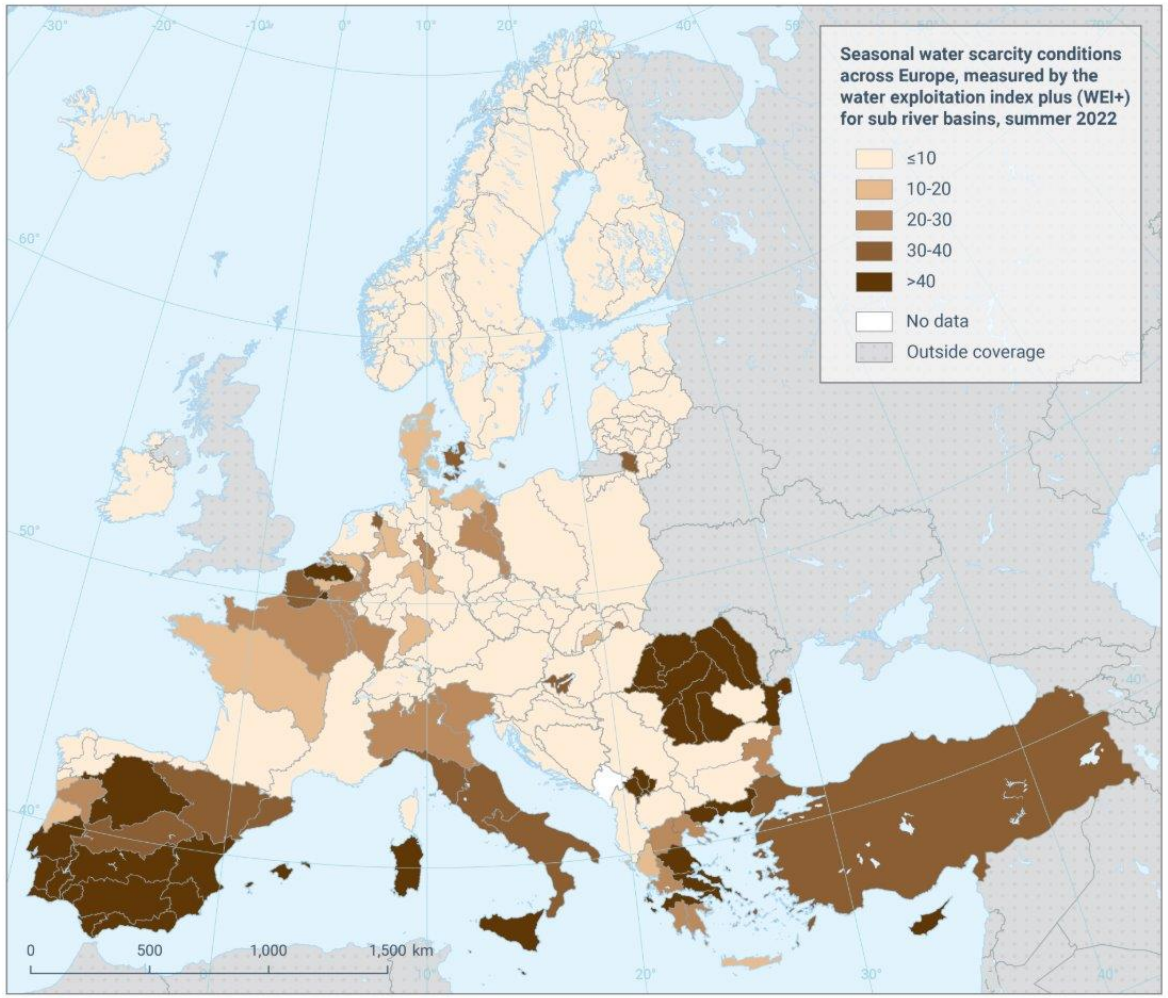
Water stress



Reference data: © EuroGeographics, © FAO (UN), © TurkStat Source: European Commission – Eurostat/GISCO

Every year, water stress affects:

30%

of Europe's territory

34%

of Europe's population

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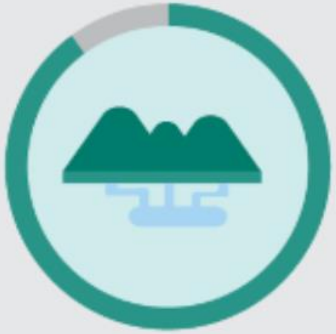
Status of Europe’s water: Not meeting EU targets

38%

of **surface waters** are in **good** or **better** ecological status

30%

of **surface waters** are in **good** chemical status



91%

of **groundwater area** is in **good** quantitative status

78%

of **groundwater area** is in **good** chemical status

Source: EEA, 2025

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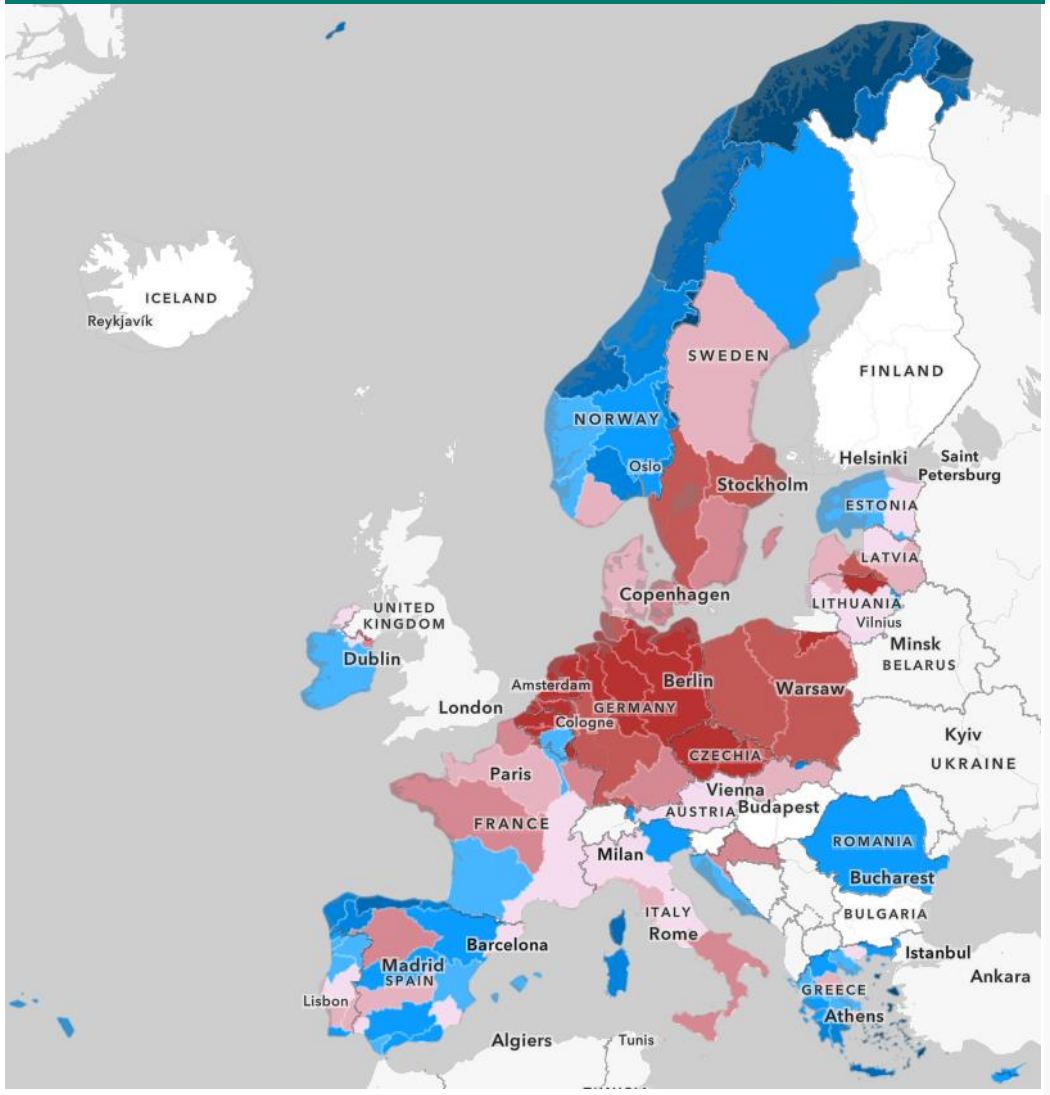
Status of Europe's surface waters

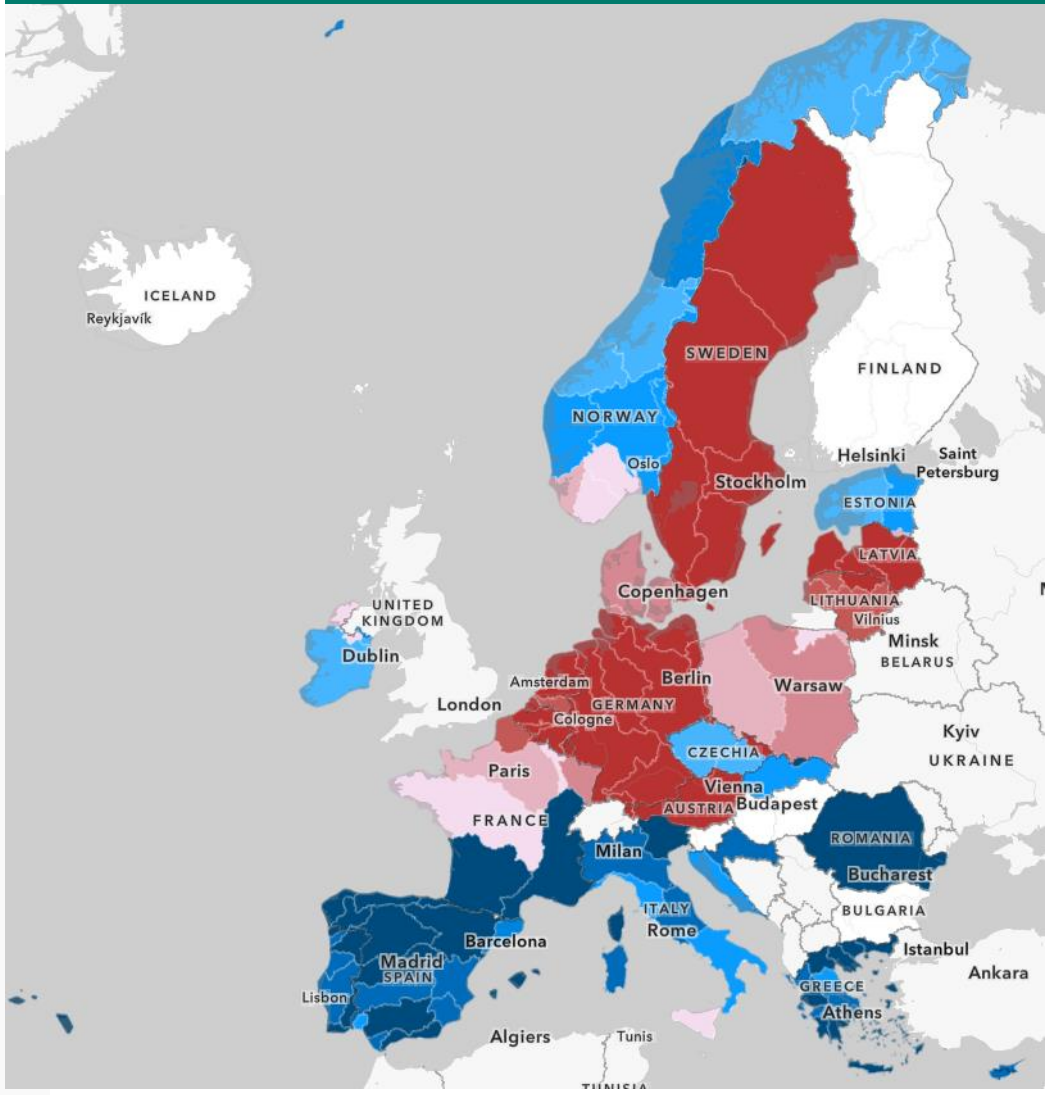
Ecological status



Water bodies failing to achieve good status

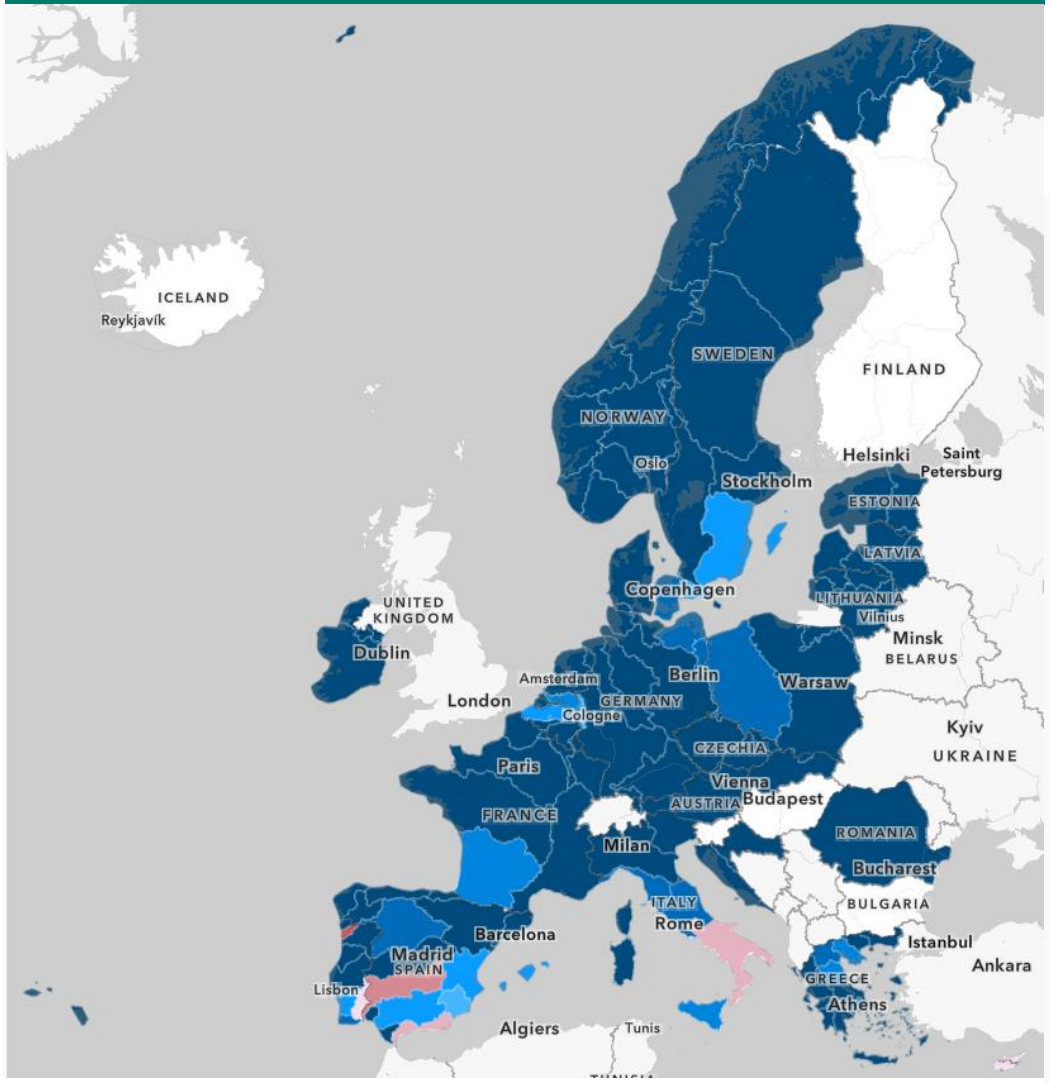
- >90%
- >80%-90%
- >70%-80%
- >60%-70%
- >50%-60%
- >40%-50%
- >30%-40%
- >20%-30%
- >10%-20%
- ≤10%
- No data

Chemical status



Status of Europe’s groundwater

Quantitative status



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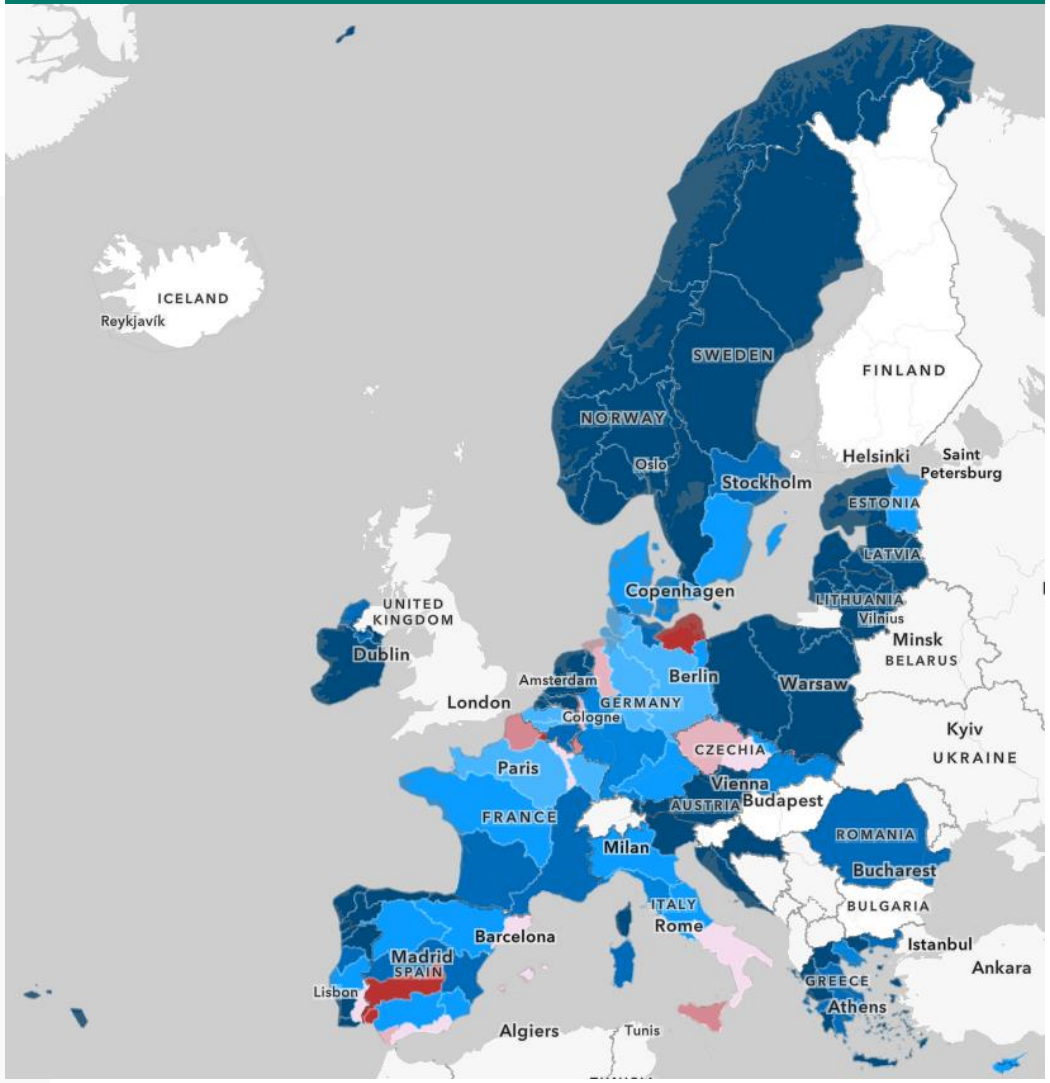
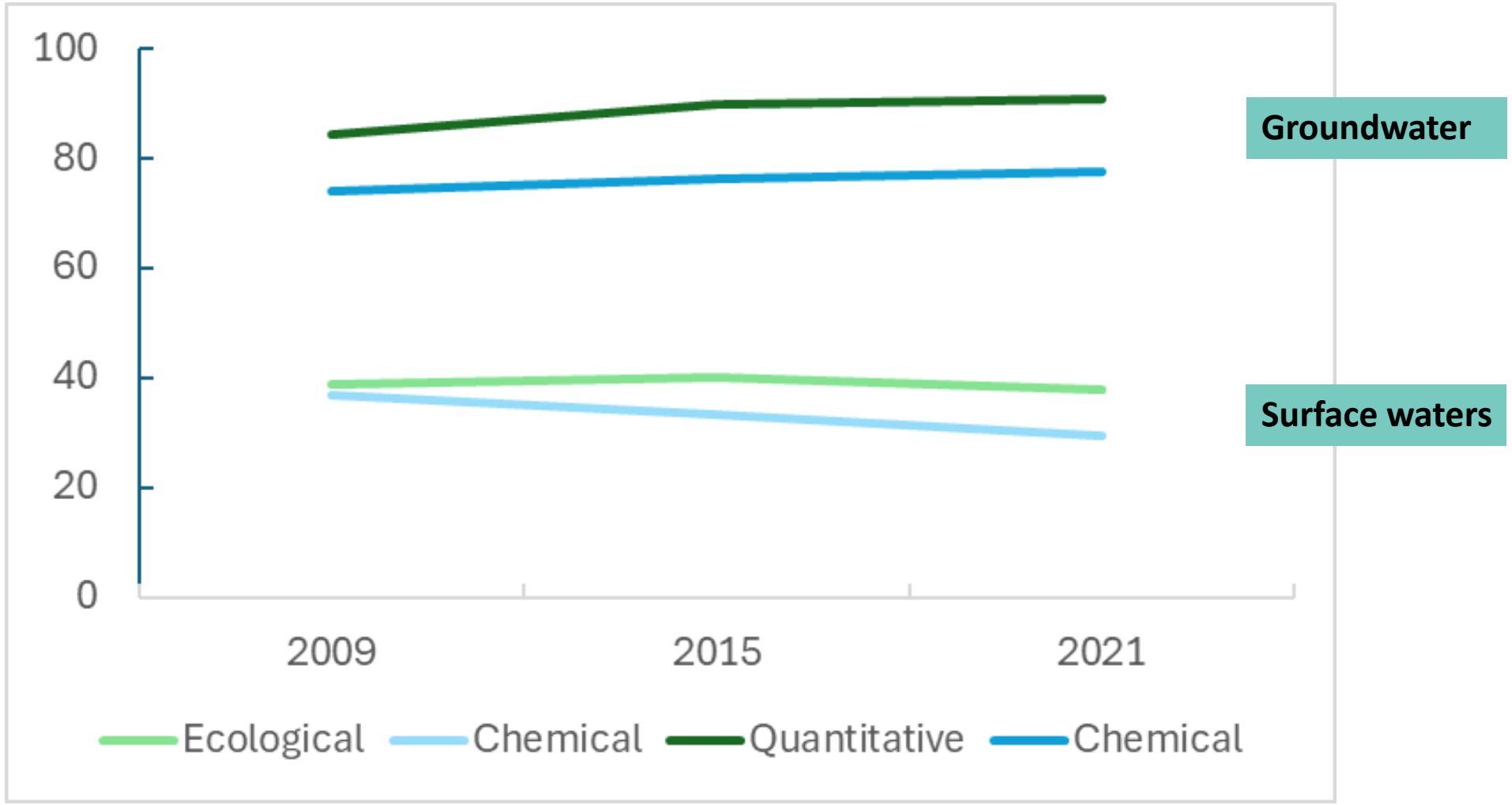


Little change in status since 2009

% waterbodies in good status



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*2021 data include 22 MS

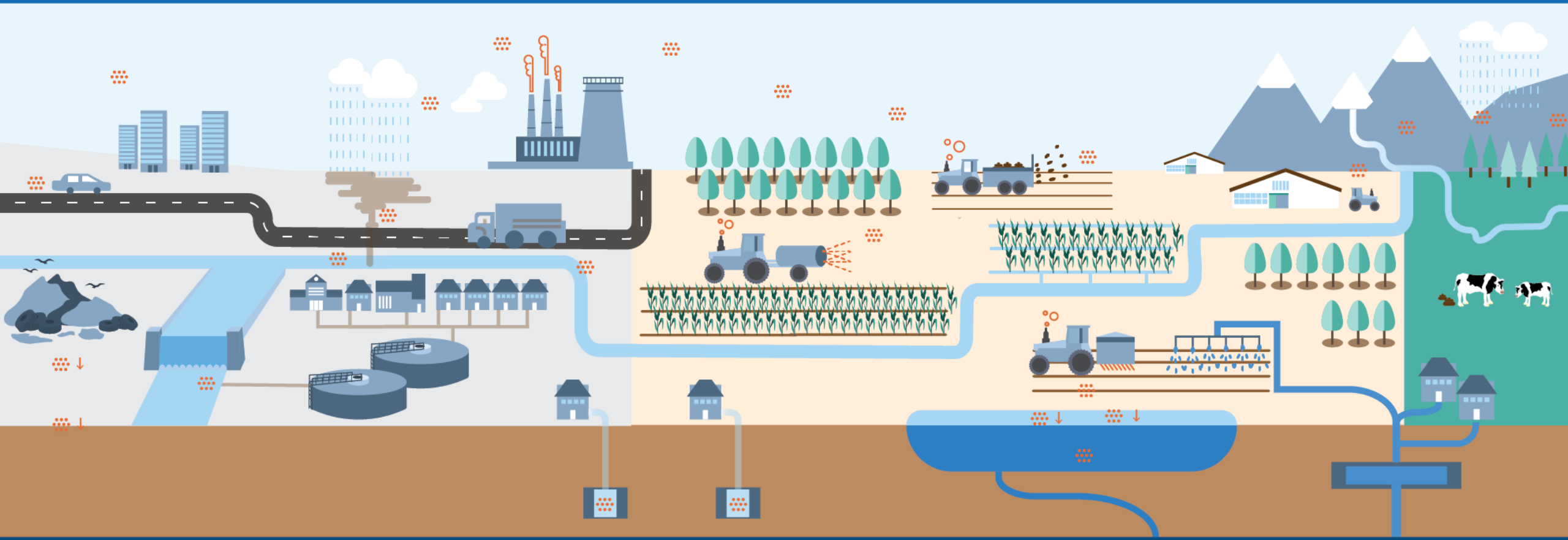
Pressures on water reported under the Water Framework Directive

Natural flow and physical features:
dams, flood protection, drainage

Point source pollution:
waste water treatment plants, industry, storm overflows

Diffuse pollution:
agriculture, septic tanks, runoff

Diffuse atmospheric pollution:
coal burning, vehicle emissions



PRESSURES TO GROUNDWATER

Point source pollution:
contaminated land, waste disposal sites

Diffuse pollution:
agriculture, urban runoff, septic tanks

Abstraction:
public water supply, agriculture, industry

Main pressures impacting Europe’s water

48 % diffuse air pollution

49 % natural flow and function

29 % diffuse agricultural pollution

19 % point source pollution

32 % diffuse agricultural pollution

20 % abstraction

23 Member States EEA, 2025

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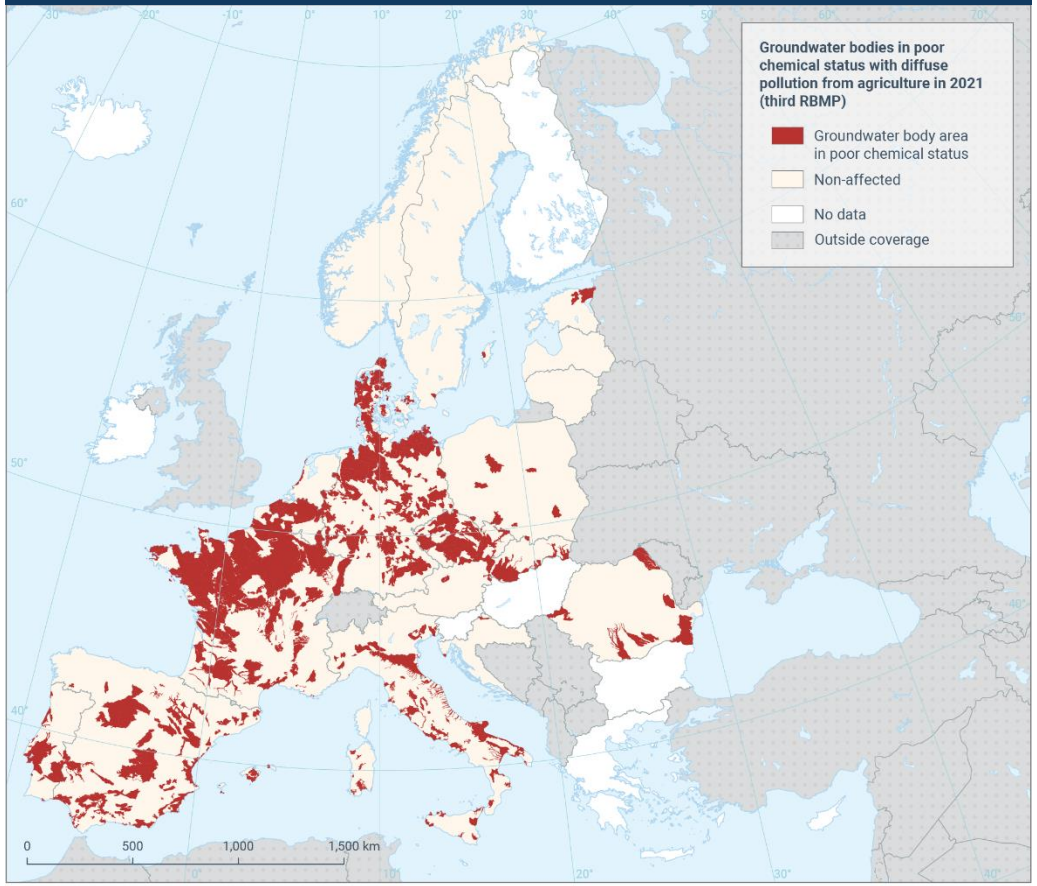
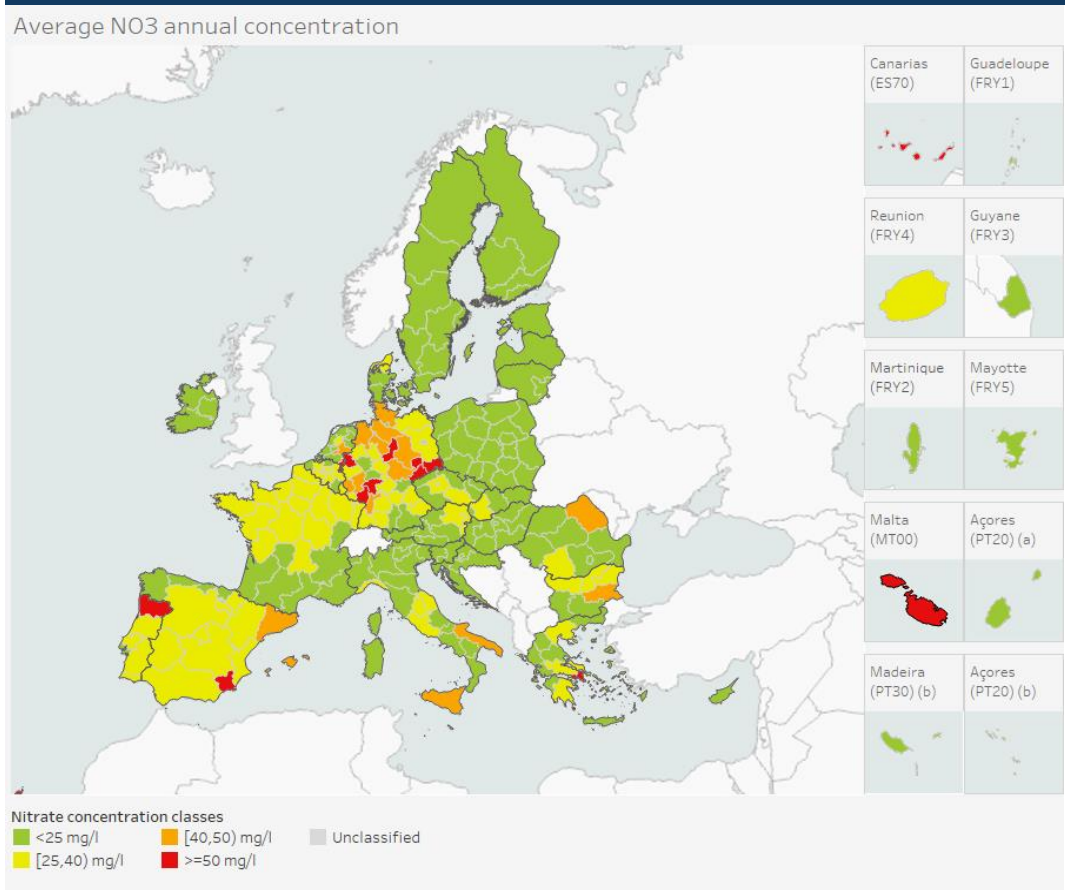
Nitrates and pesticides in groundwater

Diffuse source pollution from agriculture in groundwater (WFD, 3rd RBMP)



Nitrates in groundwater Nitrates Directive reporting (2020-2023)



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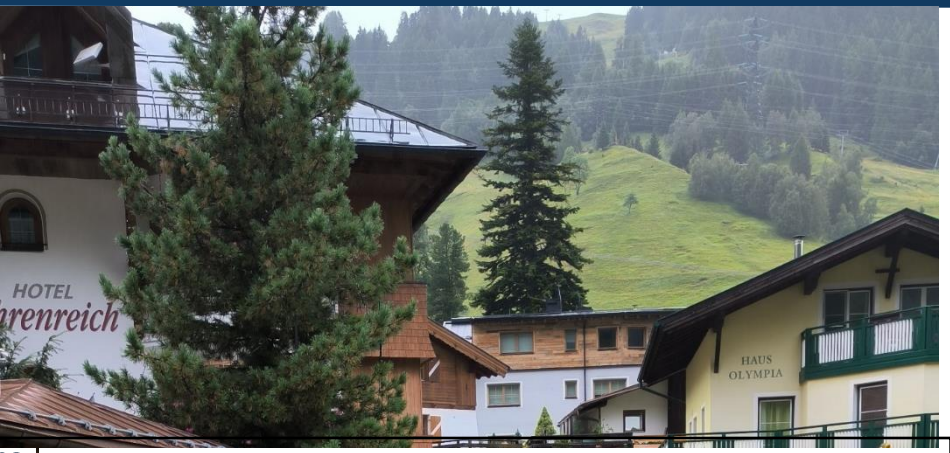
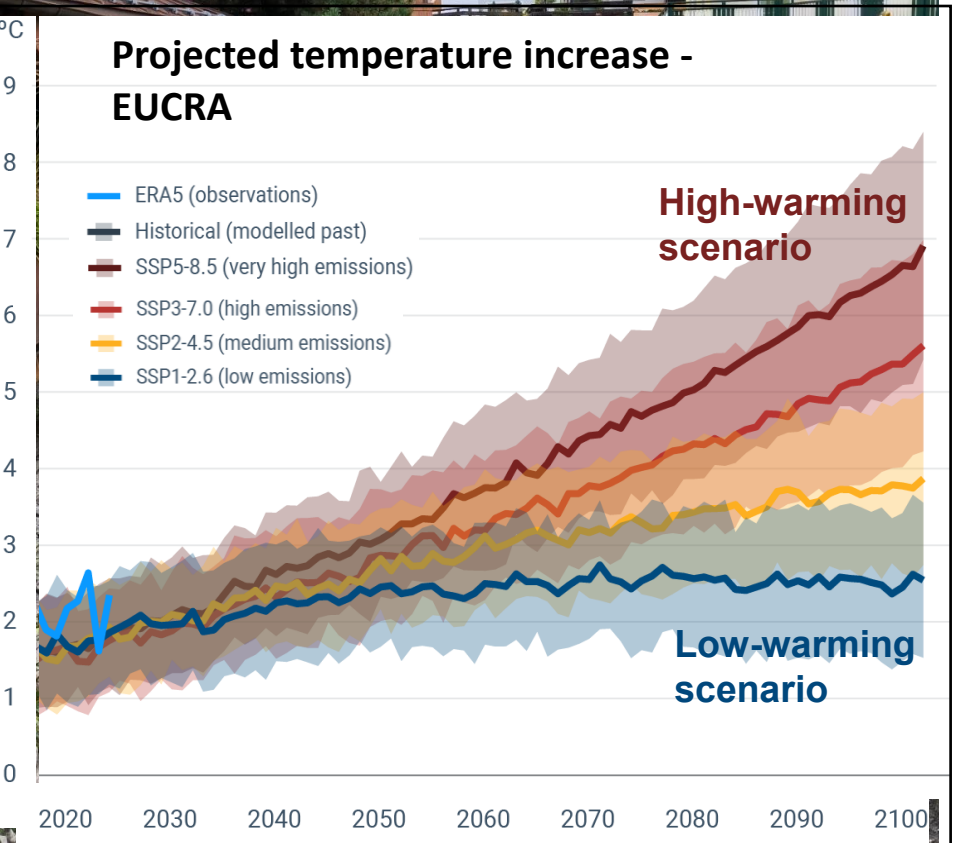
Climate change makes water management more challenging





- Floods and droughts are expensive
  - Lives and livelihoods are lost
  - 2021-2023 EUR 162 billion losses due to weather and climate extremes in EU
  - Investment needs to be put into prevention
- Combined effects of climate impacts and pollution can lead to catastrophic events
- Restoration and better pollution control can mitigate those impacts

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Having enough, good quality water for the future: achieving resilience

Reduce water use and prevent pollution

Reuse water to improve circularity

Restore rivers, floodplains and wetlands

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Examples: Improving water resilience

Restoration of the Pärnu River basin for migratory fish, Estonia

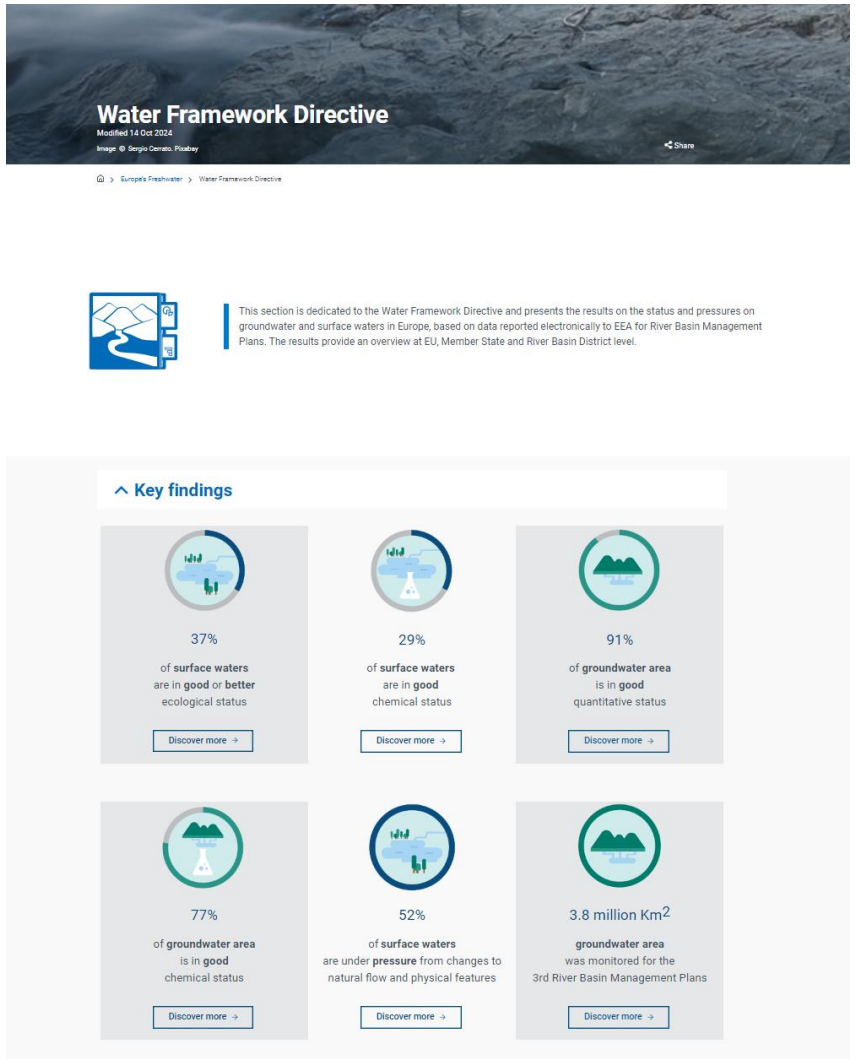
3300km river system reconnected. Improved conservation status of 32 species and provides opportunities for tourism and water sports

Wastewater reuse for irrigation in Puglia, Italy

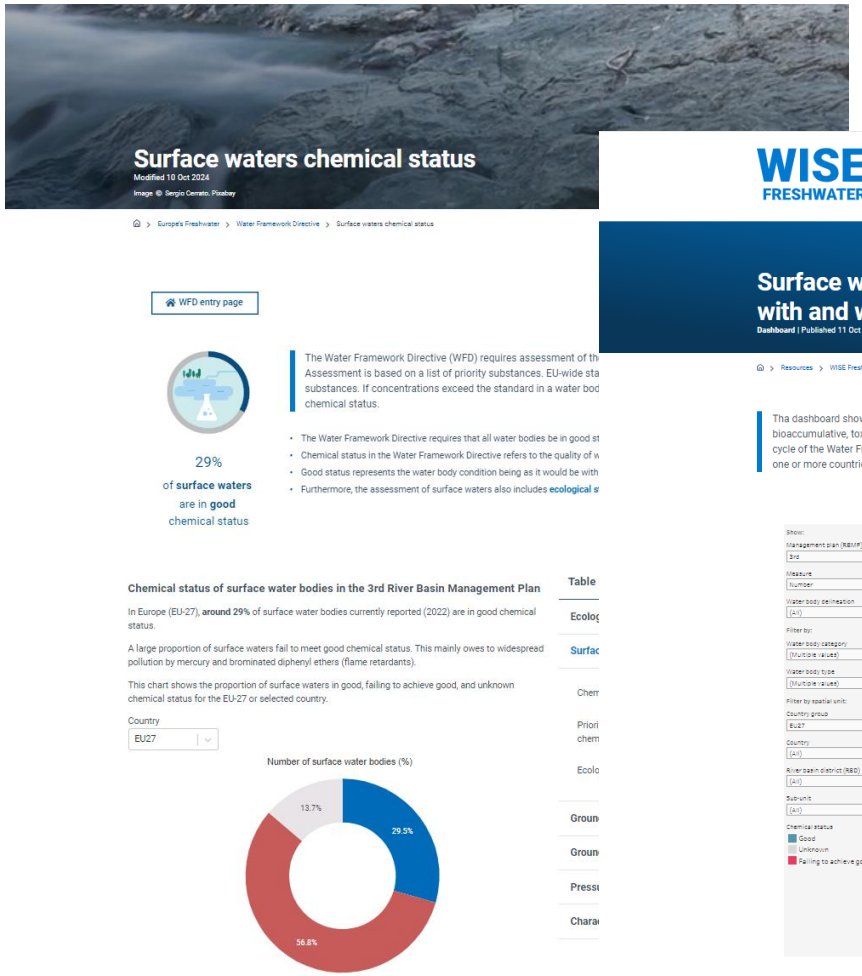
Following wastewater treatment, water is reused for irrigation for horticulture, olive trees and vineyards. This replaces previous unsustainable groundwater abstraction

WISE Freshwater

WISE FRESHWATER INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR FRESHWATER EUROPE



Key findings →



Explanatory charts →

Expert dashboards →

[WISE Freshwater WFD section]

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1

Europe's water is under significant pressure, presenting serious challenges to water security, now and in the future.

2

Europe urgently needs to improve its resilience and ensure sustainable freshwater supplies for people and the environment.

3

All key results and reported data on the EU Member States and Norway can be found in the WISE Freshwater information system.

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Thank you

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