Assessment and management of flood risks

2006/0005(COD) - 26/02/2019 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its 5th report on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60 /EC) and the Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) based on the Commission's assessment of the second River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and first Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) prepared by Member States for the period 2015-2021.

The Floods Directive, introduced in 2007 as one of the responses to the large floods along the Danube and Elbe rivers in the summer of 2002, sets a framework for reducing the risks of flood damage within the EU. The report notes that in light of increased flooding across Europe, the uncertainties surrounding flood risk management require continuous monitoring and adjustment of practices to ensure the lowest possible damages. This report focuses on progress so far, based on the first FRMPs. The Commission points out that, in its assessment, it considered, inter alia, comments made by the European Parliament on previous implementation reports. Parliament adopted a water-related resolution in 2015 stressing the synergies between the RBMPs and FRMPs.

Floods Directive – findings from first FRMPs

The report notes that under a **no-adaptation scenario** (i.e. assuming continuation of the current protection against river floods up to a current 100-year event), damages in the EU from the combined effect of climate and socioeconomic change are projected to rise from EUR 6.9 billion/year to EUR 20.4 billion /year by the 2020s, EUR 45.9 billion/year by the 2050s, and EUR 97.9 billion/year by the 2080s.

Almost all Member States reported the conclusions of their Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments and Flood Hazard and Risk Maps in their FRMPs. All Member States set objectives for the management of flood risks, and included measures for achieving the objectives. However, not all objectives are sufficiently elaborated to allow for implementation monitoring and not all measures are clearly linked to objectives. Taken together, these deficiencies may pose a challenge for the second cycle (2016-21), when Member States are expected to assess progress. The number of measures varies significantly across Member States, ranging from few individual measures to thousands of measure groups. About 50% of measures relate to prevention and preparedness, around 40% to protection from flood damage and the remaining 10% concern recovery. All 26 Member States' assessed include nature-based solutions in some or all

FRMPs, either as projects or preparatory studies. Although the Floods Directive does not mention insurance coverage against flood risks, more than half of the assessed FRMPs mention at least some related measures, including awareness raising.

All Member States reported on the prioritisation of measures, or provided a timeframe for their implementation. To illustrate, around 10% of the measures reported were of critical, 60% of very high or high, 20% of moderate and the remainder of low priority. 19 of 26 Member States assessed made some analysis of costs and benefits of measures.

About half of the Member States assessed made estimates of the costs of flood measures available, though, in many cases, not covering all FRMPs or measures. In 23 of 26 Member States, most of the FRMPs identified funding sources. However, in many cases this concerns possible funding mechanisms at large, e.g. the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Recommendations

The report states that although these are the first FRMPs, it is clear that all Member States have fundamentally embraced the concept of flood risk management even if the practical degree of elaboration varies. Achieving the key objective of the Floods Directive of reducing the potential adverse consequences from significant flooding will require sustained efforts from the part of the Member States in the following cycles.

For the second FRMPs, the report recommends that Member States should: (i) clearly link the implementation of measures to the achievement of objectives to be able to assess progress from the second cycle onwards; and (ii) identify specific funding sources to secure the implementation of measures.

The Commission will follow-up as relevant with the Member States on the recommendations contained in this report and its accompanying documents, to secure a better implementation of the requirements under the Water Framework and the Floods Directives. A stepped up enforcement of the legal obligations covering key pressures on the aquatic environment, such as those stemming from the Nitrates Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, will also be pursued.

Lastly, the report notes that Europe's waters are increasingly affected by **climate change**. Compliance with EU water law is already helping to manage the effects of a changing climate, by anticipating more droughts and floods. EU water policy holds considerable potential to mitigate climate change, provided effective action is taken now.