

Abstract - Measures for managing the adverse impacts of agriculture, overview of the applicable environmental legislation

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Legislation relying on Environmental assessments: EIA, SEA, Natura 2000 (AA), IED

An environmental Assessment is a procedure that ensures that the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before the decisions are made. Environmental assessment can be undertaken for individual projects, E.g: for agriculture: drainage, afforestation, irrigation, bioenergy plans, re-parcelling on the basis of Directive 2011/92/EU (known as 'Environmental Impact Assessment' –EIA Directive) ; or for public plans or programmes on the basis of Directive 2001/42/EC (known as 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' – SEA Directive). E.g : Rural Development Programmess. A Specific Assessment applies in Natura 2000 sites : (known as Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the habitats directive (92/43/EEC). The projects and programmes co-financed by the EU (Cohesion, Agricultural and Fisheries Policies) have to comply with the EIA and SEA Directives to receive approval for financial assistance. Directive 2010/75/EU(IED) is the main EU instrument regulating pollutant emissions from industrial installations. Industrial activities listed in Annex I of the IED include the pig and poultry sector which are required to operate in accordance with a permit.

Other legislation relying on plans and measures: WFD, Nitrates Directives, Nature Directives, SUD

The objective of the Water framework directive (2000/60/EC) is to achieve “Good status” (Good ecological and good chemical status) by 2015 (article 4) and the agriculture sector is a key actor. It will be achieved by identifying pressures (article 5) and putting in place measures (Article 11) in a River Basin Management Plan, which is revised every 6 years. The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) is a daughter directive of the WFD and aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices.

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), together with the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all the directive protects over 1.000 animals and plant species and over 200 so called "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. Many of them are dependent from agricultural systems.

For pesticides, the EU sets rules for the sustainable use of pesticides to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticide use on people's health and the environment in Directive 2009/128/EC. It especially obliges farmers to apply Integrated pest management- which consists of the promotion of low pesticide-input management including non-chemical methods. Farmers have to apply general principles of IPM from 1 January 2014.