



# The EU Water Framework Directive



## Policy and legal background

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# European Environmental Policy

*“Environment policy is one of the EU success stories....”*

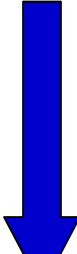


Margot Wallstrom, EU Environment Commissioner, 2001



# European Environmental Policy

- Policy is delivered through **Environmental Action Programmes**

- EAP1 1973
  - EAP2 1977
  - EAP3 1983
  - EAP4 1987
  - EAP5 1992
  - EAP6 2002
- } Remedial action to address serious pollution
- 
- Tougher standards
  - Sustainability
  - Policy integration



# EU water directives

~~Surface Water Abstraction~~

~~Directive 75/440/EEC~~

~~2007~~

Bathing Water

Directive 76/160/EEC

~~Dangerous Substances~~

~~Directive 76/464/EEC~~

~~2013~~

~~Freshwater Fish~~

~~Directive 78/659/EEC~~

~~2013~~

~~Shellfish Waters~~

~~Directive 79/923/EEC~~

~~2013~~

~~Groundwater~~

~~Directive 80/68/EEC~~

~~2013~~

Urban Wastewater Treatment

Directive 91/271/EEC

Nitrates

Directive 91/676/EC

Drinking Water

Directive 98/83/EC

Birds

Directive 79/409/EEC

Habitats

Directive 92/43/EEC

Water Framework

Directive 2000/60/EC

Register of  
Protected  
Areas

Programme of  
Measures



## Directing the flow

Priorities for future water policy



November 2002

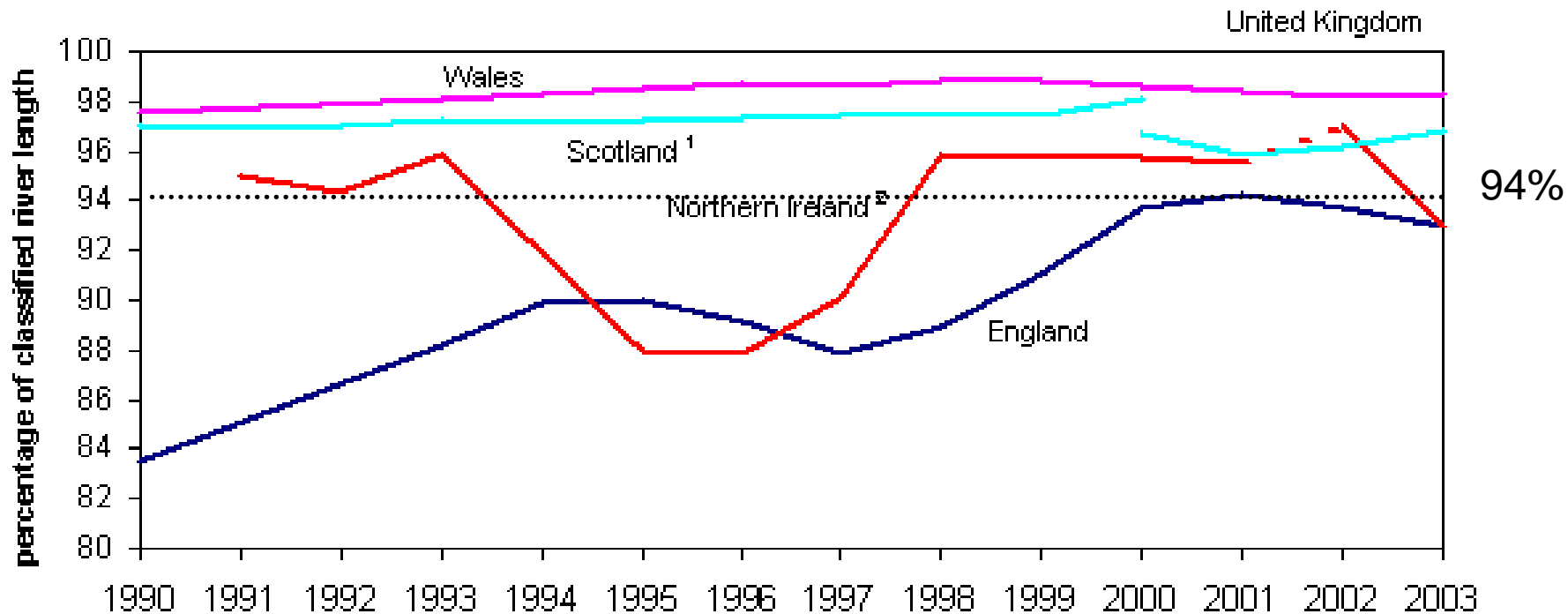
DEFRA  
Department for  
Environment and  
Rural Affairs

- Substantial improvements in water quality in recent years
- Future priorities
  - Water resources
  - Diffuse pollution
  - Policy integration, e.g.
    - land use planning
    - agriculture
    - within water policy area
  - Sustainable development principles
- ***“Implementation of WFD will provide the most important single means of taking forward the aims of this document”.***



# Recent trends

Figure 1: Rivers of good or fair chemical quality: 1990-2003



1. Scottish river classification network changed in 2000.

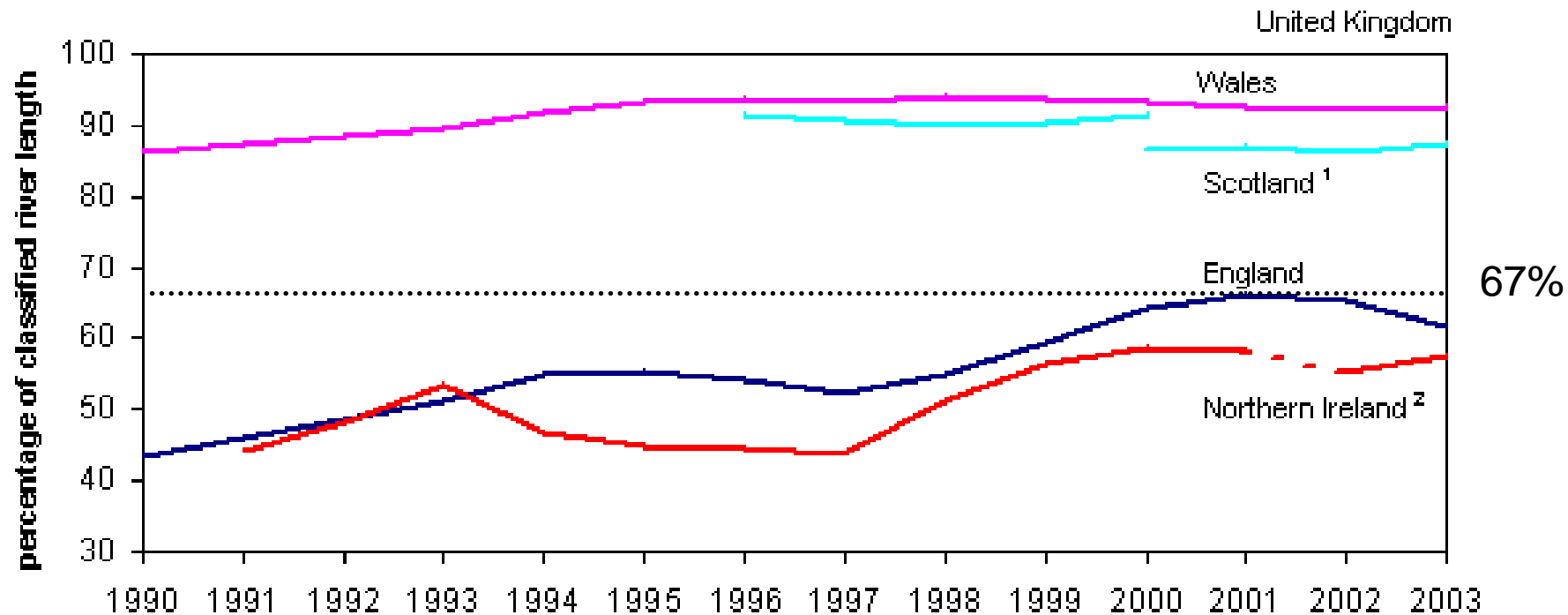
2. Northern Ireland classified network significantly expanded in 2002.

Source: EA, SEPA, EHS



# Recent trends

Figure 2: Rivers of good chemical quality: 1990-2003



1. Scottish river classification network changed in 2000.

2. Northern Ireland classified network significantly expanded in 2002.

Source: EA, SEPA, EHS



## Raising the bar

- “Good” not “good or fair”
- Water quality is more than “GQA Chemistry”



**Diffuse pollution**



**Low flows**



**River  
engineering**

# Transposition to English & Welsh Legislation



- **Water Framework Directive (England & Wales) Regs 2003**
  - EA the competent authority, duties defined
  - River Basin Districts identified
  - All public bodies.....
    - must have regard to River Basin Management Plans
    - must provide information
    - must be consulted
- **Regulation of activities** – largely through existing legislation
  - Water Resources Act 1991
  - Water Act 2003
  - Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975
  - etc
- **Some activities not regulated** - new legislation needed?
  - Morphological pressures, e.g. dredging
  - Diffuse pollution

