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**Meeting of Eureau I held in Seville
on 5/6 November 1992**

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Report No: FR 0340

November 1992

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1. GENERAL

This was the most highly attended meeting of EUREAU I in the last several years. Whether this is due to the location or a new enthusiasm for European affairs has yet to be seen. D G Miller and P T McIntosh attended for the UK.

2. DRINKING WATER DIRECTIVE

2.1 National and European Seminars

Several national seminars had been planned or were about to take place. An account was presented of the UK meeting in London, including a summary of the specific points made about the EUREAU proposals. These would now be included by the rapporteurs for the Madrid meeting. Specific points arising from the presentation of the UK conclusions included the question of converting WHO Guidelines, which are based on lifetime consumption, to absolute MACs, the monitoring implications of a rigorous statistical approach and the problems of meeting the coliform standards due to contamination at the tap.

The organising Committee for the European Seminar in Madrid (3-4 March 1993) had met on the previous day and final arrangements had been discussed. Specifically it had been agreed that two-page summaries of the presentations would be made available to delegates and that a summary report of the main conclusions would be drawn up and published. The detailed national reports would not be published.

Concerning invitations to the seminar, it was agreed that there would be no restrictions on attendance, including environmental and other pressure groups and the media. Generally invitation would be made by the National Associations. It was agreed that effort should be put in to ensuring that the media did not distort the message being given by EUREAU as had partially been the case with the UK press following the London meeting. In particular suggestions that EUREAU was seeking to weaken the Directive should be guarded against.

2.2 WHO Revisions

M Rapinat the Chairman gave an account of his attendance at the final meeting in Geneva of the Guideline revision group and in particular addressed the question of the philosophy of WHO in deriving their guidelines. This included the ground rules for toxicology, constraints introduced due to economic impact and limitations on analytical techniques and the question of translating WHO values into national standards. There was a short discussion on the durability of the provisional standard for bromate and the treatment by WHO of the acceptability (formerly comfort) parameters.

It was agreed that a small sub-group would be convened, chaired by Derek Miller, to draw up some EUREAU position statements on the implications of the WHO revisions, with particular reference to bromate, lead and boron. A preliminary review will be prepared of member states' legislation on lead and practices towards pipe replacement, funding, bottled water for children etc. This would assist other member states and demonstrate to the Commission that there were already many responsible and sensible provisions in place or in hand. A draft paper would be prepared for discussion at the next meeting of EUREAU I in January.

3. SURFACE WATER DIRECTIVE

This question was raised by the Finnish representative who was concerned with the implications of adopting the Surface Water Directive under national law. EUREAU I stated that the Directive was considered to be obsolete in view of the existence of the drinking water Directive and the proposed introduction of an ecological Directive for surface waters. A way out of the problem for Finland and other Nordic countries was not obvious because their Governments had accepted the adoption of EC legislation. The only prospect was to adopt the legislation but not comply with it on the grounds that it was to be superseded by the new proposed measures. The Finnish representative was particularly concerned about the irrelevance of many of the parameters, the lack of correspondence with the drinking water Directive values and the impact on monitoring requirements for small supplies due to the use of a percentage compliance approach.

4. GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

The paper prepared by the working group on groundwater policy was examined and discussed. The chairman pointed out that the new EC thinking was to combine groundwater policy matters with the ecological quality measures for surface water to provide a total integrated pollution control approach.

A number of items in the groundwater paper gave rise to problems and had led to lengthy debates in the sub-groups. These included: the amount of information to be provided to Brussels to assist in preparation of an informed approach; whether all groundwater should be included or only those aquifers likely to be used for drinking water; and a statement on the long-term goal for groundwater quality. Although EUREAU I was confident of finding compromise wording on the first two issues, the main sticking point was the third matter where the German delegation was insisting on an approach where the goal is restoration of groundwater quality to a standard represented by pristine water uncontaminated by human activity. This is a principle enshrined in German law. A proposal was made by the UK delegation for compromise wording but this failed to gain immediate approval and required further modification between sessions of the Committee.

The paper was amended by Peter McIntosh (UK), Caroline Luenstedt (Germany) and Michel Rapinat (France and Chairman) - to better reflect the concerns of several countries and to improve drafting. This amendment was formally agreed by EU I and has been passed to EU III (Birmingham 9/10 November 1992) with a firm recommendation that it should not be changed significantly and then sent forward to the Board of Management Task Force (11 December 1992) for final agreement and forwarding to the Commission. In particular:

1. The references to restoring groundwater to its natural state were removed.
2. The requirements of the Commission for data were much reduced.
3. The strategic role, rather than detail, of the Commission was emphasised.

A small Working Group (UK, Belgium, Netherlands, France), to be chaired by Peter McIntosh, is to develop a draft paper on artificial recharge principles and practice. The intention is to pass this on to the Commission, who are thought to be intending to bring forward proposals. The Working Group will prepare its draft for consideration at the January 1993 EU I meeting.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF WATERWORKS SLUDGES UNDER THE HAZARDOUS WASTE DIRECTIVE (91/689/EC)

A note by the UK (Peter McIntosh, EU-92-31) was adopted as a letter to be sent to the Commission. It formally recommends that the appendix to the Directive does not generally designate water treatment works sludges as hazardous, but rather sets sensible limit values to define hazardous or non hazardous. In this way many water treatment sludges could continue to go to normal landfill, farmland or be spread on site. And the image of drinking water would not be adversely affected by the "hazardous" label.

6. INTEGRATED POLLUTION AND CONTROL/SEVESO ANNEX

M Rapinat will prepare a draft letter to the Commission for the next EU I meeting (January 1993) advocating that the Commission focuses on overall Environmental Management and does not get involved in fine detail.

7. NEXT MEETINGS

21/22 January 1993
13/14 May 1993
21/22 October 1993