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THE EUROPEAN GOLF ASSOCIATION GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

ENGAGING LOCALLY IN EU RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

I. Introduction

What is the EGA Golf Course Committee?

The EGA Golf Course Committee (EGA GCC) was formed in November 2008 and held its first meeting in Brussels on 15 January 2009. The purpose of the Committee is to present a single European voice to the EU, representing the game of golf, on environmental matters to build relationships with appropriate contacts in Brussels. The Committee anticipates and provides advice on EU legislation which may affect golf courses in Europe to relevant organisations (notably the national associations who are members of the European organisations represented on the Committee) in order to raise awareness and encourage appropriate action at national and local levels. This will enable to position golf as a leader in sustainable recreation.

The Committee is comprised of the following organisations:

- European Golf Association
- European Golf Course Owners Association
- European Institute of Golf Course Architects
- Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations
- PGA European Tour
- Professional Golf Associations of Europe
- Club Managers Association of Europe
- The R&A

What is the issue?

Member States are currently working on River Basin Management Plans which will be sent to the European Commission by December 2009. Such plans will include a set of measures to improve water quality and water management across Europe. Member States may prioritise agriculture needs which do not always match the interests of the golf sector.

Why should your golf organisation care about this?

Decisions on the most appropriate measures to achieve the objectives in the River Basin Management Plans will be taken in your locality without your input, unless you engage with the process. Your organisation can influence the direction of environmental protection, which will affect the final outcome of the river basin plans. This is a unique opportunity to communicate golf needs to your local authorities and to have them reflected in the final management plans of your river basin district. In addition, by getting in contact with the local authorities in charge of water management you will also establish a broader network for future needs.

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2. How to engage

How can your golf organisation get involved?

You can easily get involved in the preparation of River Basin Management Plans by following the following steps:

- contact your local or regional authorities in charge of water management (please see attached list)
- introduce your golf organisation
- explain that the purpose of your call is to have a brief discussion on the ongoing River Basin Management Plans, which can have a direct impact on golf
- present the initiatives you are undertaking on water management and assess whether they can be taken on board by the River Basin Management Plans of your region before being sent to the European Commission
- follow up the contact by requesting a meeting or by restating your messages in a letter
- send feedback of your contact to your EGA GCC member so that it can be centrally recorded.

Some Member States have already started public consultations to gather stakeholder's feedback, so you may be able to submit your comments in terms of water management initiatives and golf needs in the context of these public consultations.

Which tools do you need to contact your local officials?

To confirm to which river basin district you belong to, please check the link http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/participation/map_mc/map.htm

3. Background information

Why is the EU focused on water?

A recent EU survey has confirmed the increasing demand by citizens and environmental organisations for cleaner rivers and lakes, groundwater and coastal beaches.

This demand by citizens is one of the main reasons why the Commission has made water protection one of the priorities of its work. In this context, European Water Policy has undergone a thorough restructuring process, leading to the adoption of the Water Framework Directive in 2000. This Framework Directive is the operational tool, setting the objectives for water protection.

What are the goals of the Water Framework Directive?

- Expand the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater
- Achieve "good status" for all waters by a set deadline
- Get the citizen involved more closely
- Streamline legislation

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Why River Basin Management?

European Authorities have established that the best model for a single system of water management is management by river basin instead of relying on administrative or political boundaries. While several Member States already take a river basin approach, this is at present not the case everywhere. For each river basin district - some of which will go beyond national frontiers - a "River Basin Management Plan" will be established and updated every six years.

The process of river basin management planning includes the preparation of programmes for measures at basin level to achieve the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive in a cost-effective way.

The European Commission has established a central water data webportal, the water Information System for Europe (WISE), to facilitate flow of information collected at EU level by various institutions and bodies. This can be accessed at <http://water.europa.eu/en/welcome>

What will the River Basin Management Plan look at?

The plan aims at improving the water in rivers, estuaries and other wetlands.

The plan will detail how the objectives set for the river basin can be reached within the timescale required and it will be the main reporting mechanism to the Commission and the public. It will include:

- the river basin's characteristics
- a review of the impact of human activity on the status of waters in the basin
- an estimation of the effect of existing legislation and the remaining "gap" to meeting these objectives
- a set of measures designed to fill the gap
- an economic analysis of water use within the river basin, to assess the cost-effectiveness of the various possible measures.

Some of the measures will include control of pollution at source through the setting of emission limit values as well as through the setting of environmental quality standards. The use of economic instruments, such as water pricing, is part of the basic measures. The 'polluter pays' principle should be taken into account as the directive aims to ensure that pricing policies improve the sustainable use of water resources.

What is the timing?

Member States must adopt River Basin Management Plans by the end of 2009. If you have not already engaged in this process, it is important that you do so before this deadline and that you advise your EGA GCC member of any action you have taken.