



***HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
ACCESS TO WATER  
The case of Wallonia***

*2<sup>th</sup> november 2010*

# INTRODUCTION

## What is the place of water in Belgian laws

### BELGIUM :

- Water is a public good fundamental for life and health with a strong social and environmental dimension.
- Protocol on Water and Health : *Water is essential to sustain life and that availability in quantity and in quality is a prerequisite for improved health and sustainable development.*
- *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.*
- *Convention on the rights of the child*
- *Belgian Constitution : the citizens should be able to live in dignified manner and have therefor the right to the protection of a save environment and health.*

# Human rights and access to water

## WALLONIA :

Book 2 of the Environmental Code :

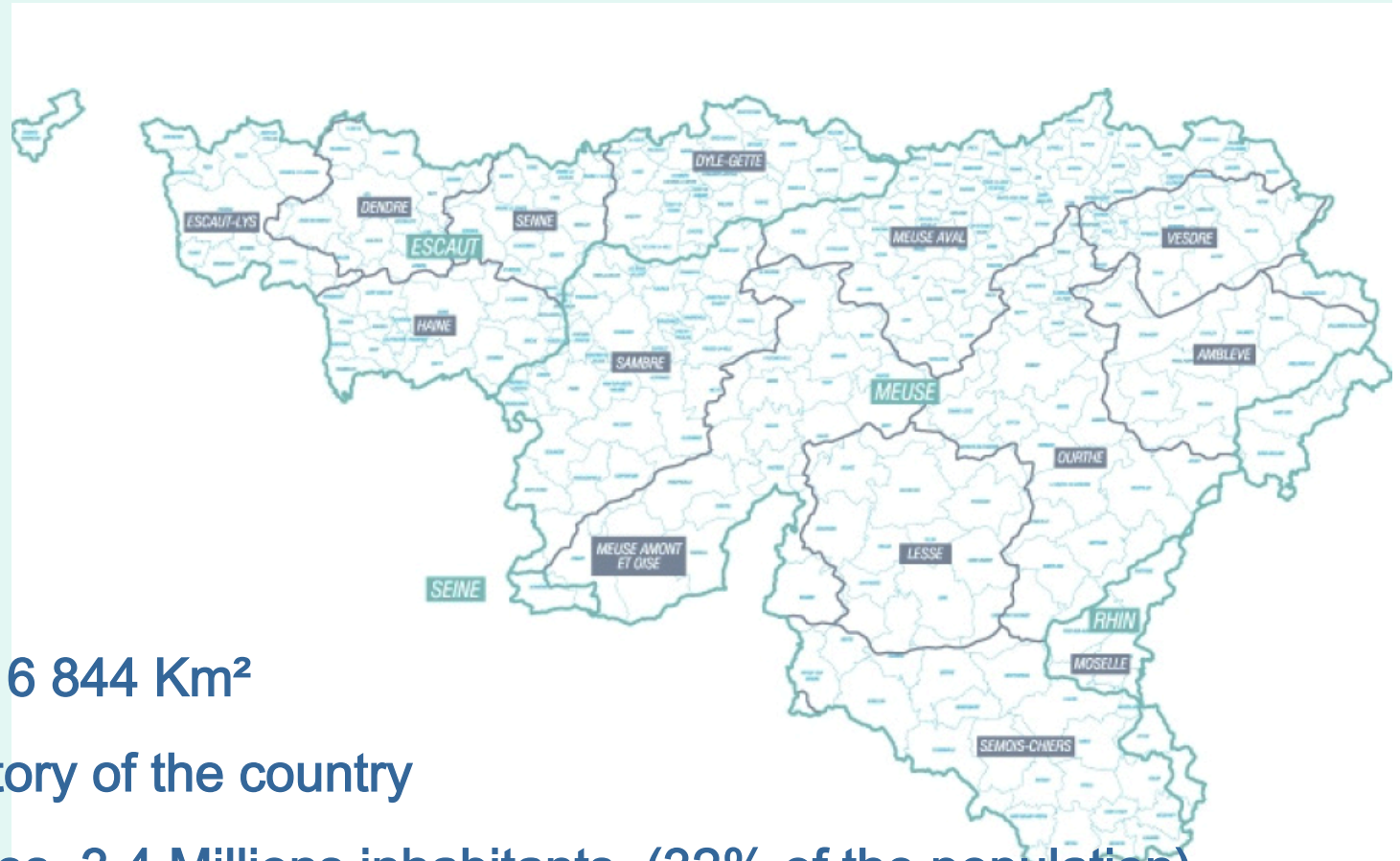
*Water is a part of the common heritage of the Walloon region ...  
each person has the right to dispose of drinking water of quality and  
in sufficient quantity for its nutrition, its household needs and its  
health.*

# A. DESCRIPTION OF WALLOON WATER SECTOR



## Wallonia :

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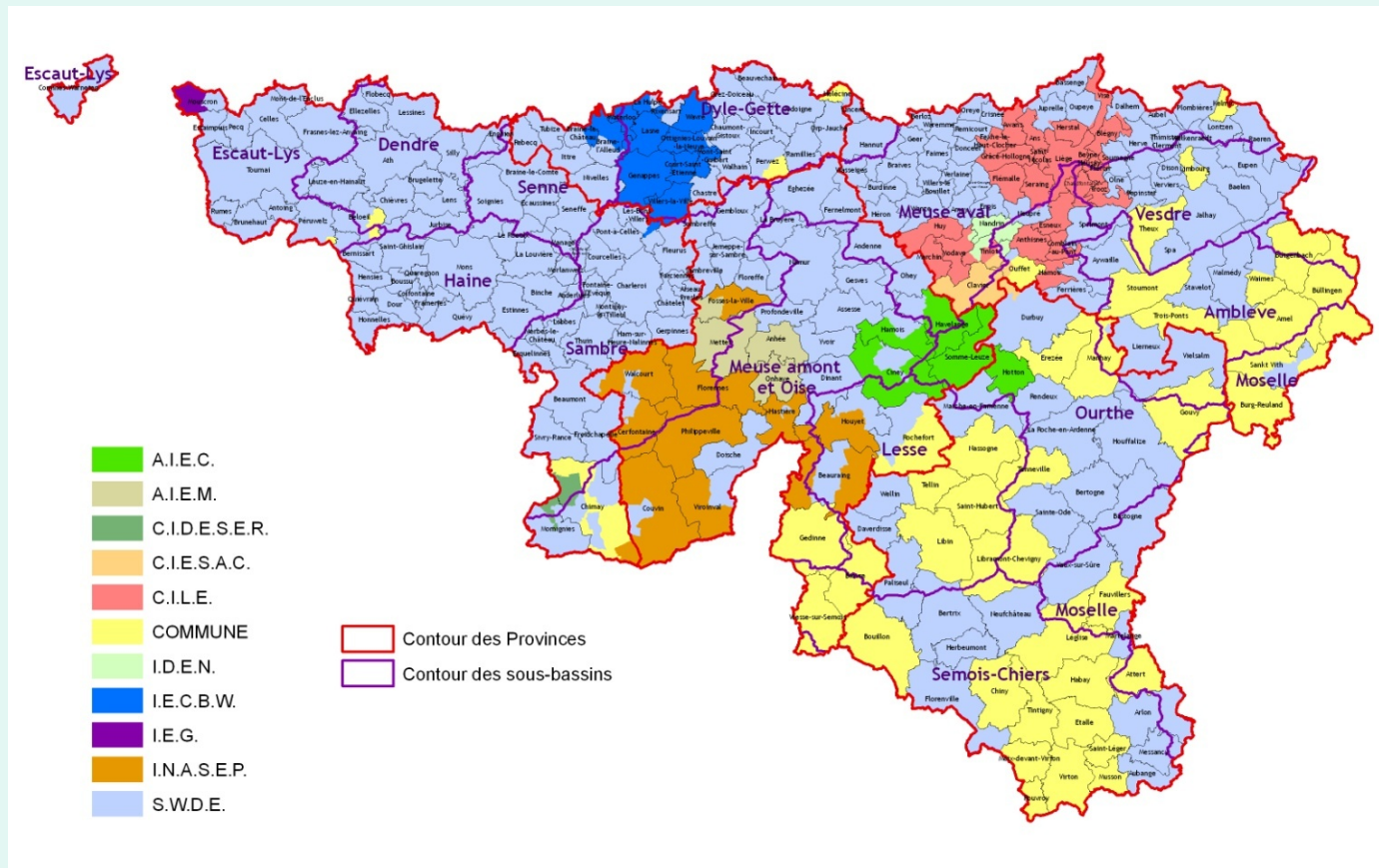


- Surface area : 16 844 Km<sup>2</sup>
- 55% of the territory of the country
- 262 municipalities, 3.4 Millions inhabitants, (32% of the population)
- Four main river basins : Meuse, Scheldt , Rhine, Seine
- All the water operators are public

## 3 kinds of operators :

- 1 Regional operator : (SWDE) : 67 % of the population
- 41 Municipalities services : 6% of the population
- 10 Intercos : 27 % of the population

## Water supply sector in the Walloon Region



[Intercommunales (interco) = associations of municipalities]

# Waste Water treatment policy :

Walloon Region Decree (1999/15/04)



Investment and financing the waste water treatment policy

European Directive  
CEE 91/271

Protection of wells

Waste water Treatment Plants

Collectors

Sewage

Central body for the co-ordination of the water sector in the Walloon Region

7 WWT intercos

In general context of

« Coût-vérité » or  
« truth-cost »

European Directive  
CEE 2000/60

## B. WATER PRICE IN WALLONIA





# Composition of a water bill

- CVD
- CVA
- Water social fund

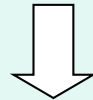
# 1. Water price in Wallonia

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Water pricing : Application of « TRUTH COST »



Truth cost of water aims to include all services costs in water price = *full-cost recovery pricing*



**TRUTH COST FOR DISTRIBUTION (CVD)**

[established by distributors]  
[based on water accounting plan]

**TRUTH COST FOR SEWAGE AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT (CVA)**

[established by SPGE]  
[based on financial plan]

- Sewage (SPGE, Interco's)
- Waste water treatment (SPGE, Interco's)
- Protection of wells (SPGE, Producers, Protectis)

## 2. Water pricing structure

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### General principle :

- One invoice per water meter
- Water bill is proportional to consumption

Fixed charge	:	20 CVD + 30 CVA
From 0 to 30 m <sup>3</sup>	:	½ CVD
From 30 to 5 000 m <sup>3</sup>	:	CVD + CVA
From 5 000 to 25 000 m <sup>3</sup>	:	0.9 CVD + CVA
> 25 000 m <sup>3</sup>	:	a CVD + CVA with $0.5 \leq a \leq 0.9$
+ <i>Water social fund</i>	:	0.0125 €/m <sup>3</sup>
+ <i>VAT</i>	:	6 %

### 3. Calculation of CVD

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#### General principles :

- Based on the water accounting plan
- Standardized accounting of water distributors charges
- Analytical accounting per final and intermediate cost centers
- Repartition of charges by production units, transport lines and distribution networks

#### Customer profit :

- Price transparency for all operators towards their customers
- Comparability of prices between all operators (performance indicators)

## 4. Truth cost for sewage and WWT

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### General principles :

- CVA is determined by Walloon Government and SPGE
- Based on the current investment plan from which comes the financial plan
- CVA varies year by year but is identical for all the distributors (so for all the territory)
- CVA includes 60 % of sewage and 100 % investments in collectors and waste water plant.



Water control Committee gives an advice on each increasing of CVA

## 5. Water pricing in Wallonia

### Estimation of the average water bill for households :

- Year: 01/2010
- $CVD_{SWDE} : 2,25 \text{ € / m}^3$ , VAT excluded,  $CVA : 1,407 \text{ € / m}^3$ , VAT excluded
- average household size in Wallonia : 2,3 persons
- average household consumption :  $75 \text{ m}^3$  / year (source: Aquawal)
- average daily consumption: 89 litres / person / day

		Amount in €	Price € / m <sup>3</sup>
Fixed component:	$20 \times CVD + 30 \times CVA$	87,21	
Variable component:	From 0 to 30 m <sup>3</sup> : $0,5 \times CVD$	33,75	
	From 30 to 5.000 m <sup>3</sup> : $CVD + CVA$	164,56	
Water social fund	$\text{Consumption} \times 0,0125 \text{ € / m}^3$	0,94	
VAT	6%	17,19	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>303,66</b>	<b>4,05</b>

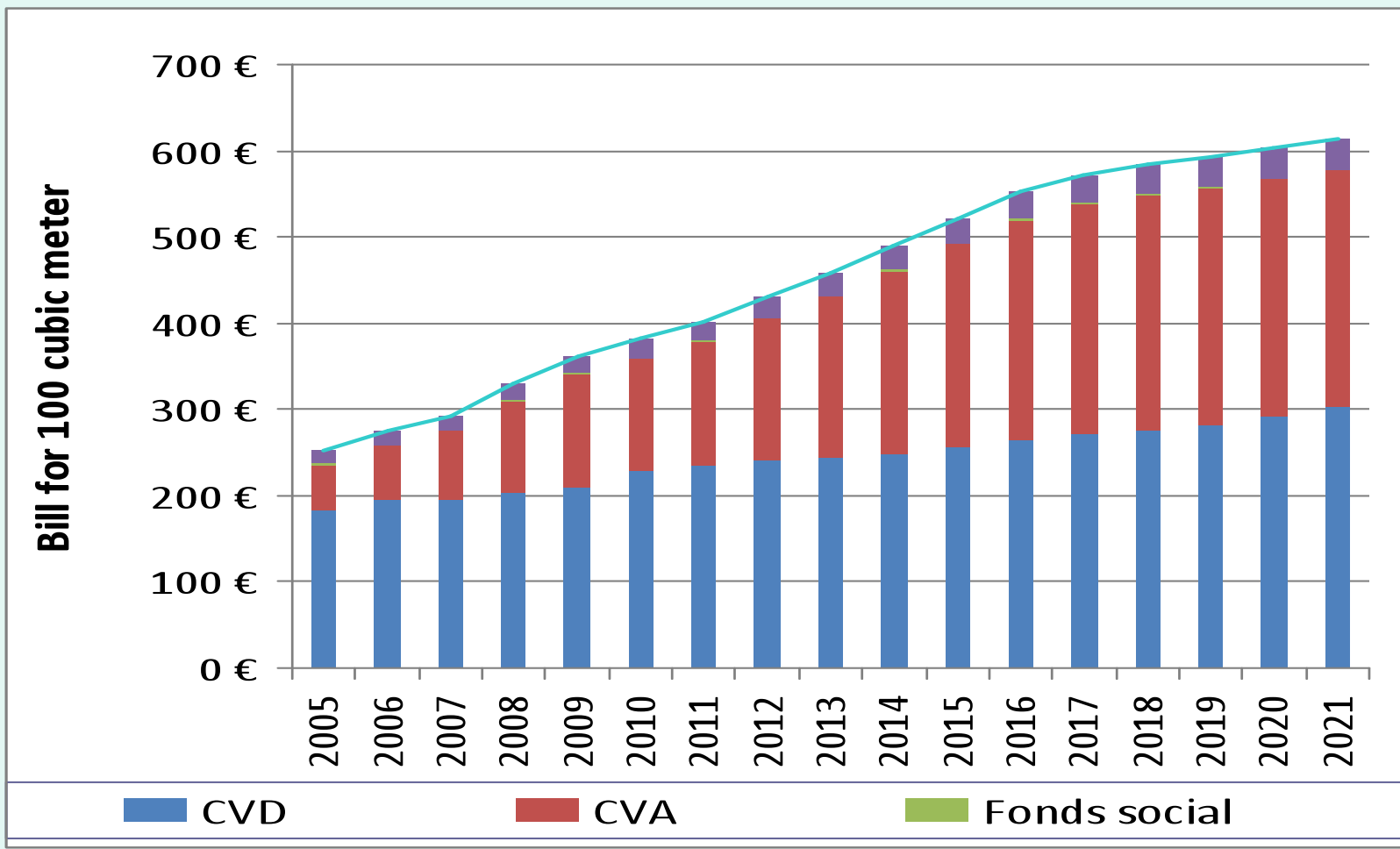
## C. THE WATER SOCIAL FUND IN WALLONIA

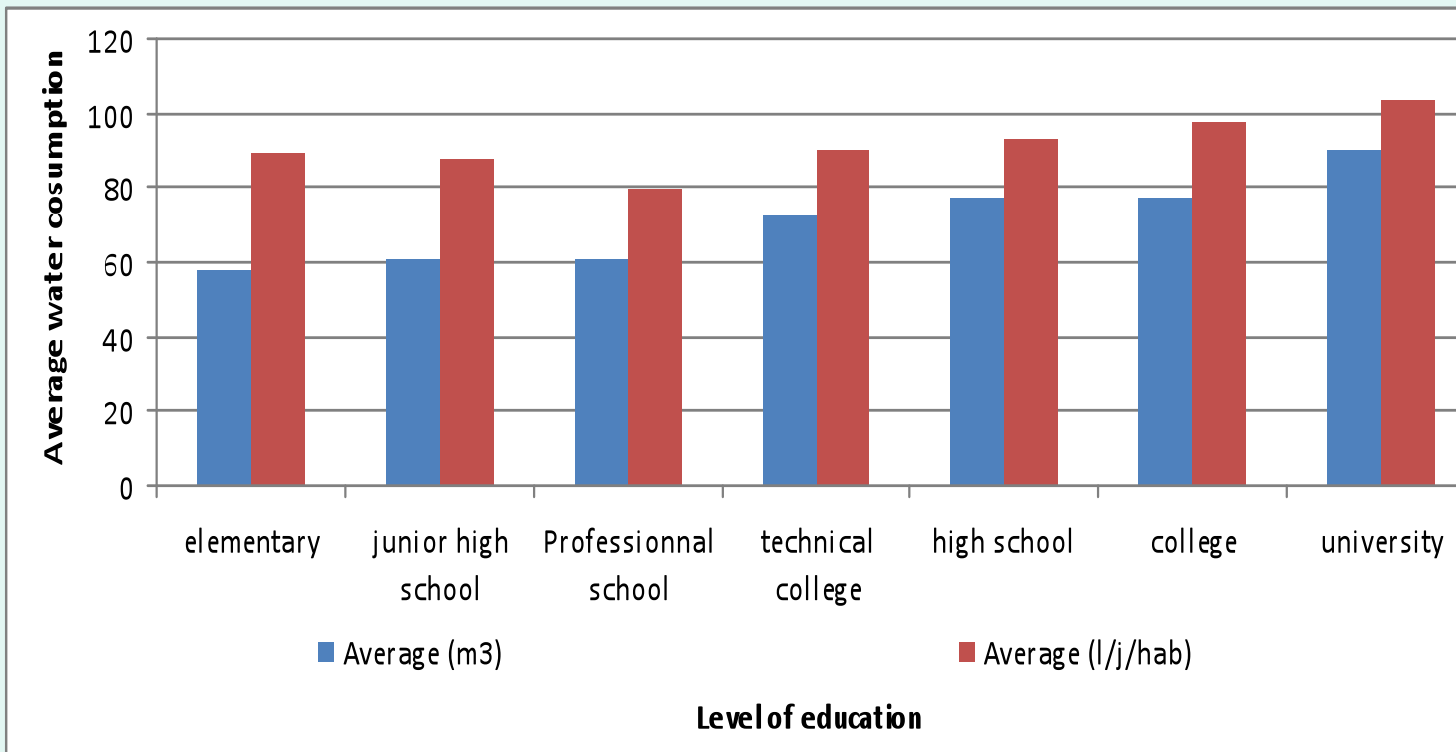


## Evolution of the number of consumers in difficulties to pay their bill

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of consumers in difficulties</b>
31/12/2004	47.263
31/12/2005	67.580
31/12/2006	76.580
31/12/2007	103.054
31/12/2008	107.623
31/12/2009	121.282







## *Aim :*

*Play a part in water bills payment for consumers with financial difficulties*

*= Financial mechanism based on the participation of :*

- the water distributors*
- the CPAS*
- the SPGE*

## Principle :

- *setting-up a fund*
- *drawing rights = rights of the CPAS on the fund proportionally of the difficulties of their consumers to pay their bill.*

## *Fund setting-up :*

- *0,0125 € per m<sup>3</sup> of billed water, paid by the consumer.*
- *= 2 millions €/year*

## Procedure :

- *Reminder in case of unpaid bill*
- *Forwarding the lists to the CPAS*
- *Decision of the CPAS*
- *Intervention of the social fund in the limits of the rules (282 € per household + 85 € per supplementary person being part of the household from the 4<sup>th</sup> one.*

## Some results for 2009 :

- *Number of beneficiaries of the social insertion income on the 01/01/2008 :* 39.827
- *Number of consumers with paying difficulties on the 31/12/2008 :* 107.623
- *Number of interventions in 2009 :* 11.008
- *Number of interventions/number of water meters :* 0,0077
- *Prices of the interventions :* 1.926.665,00 €

## Evolution of the use of drawing rights

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of interventions</b>	<b>Total price of the interventions (in €)</b>	<b>Average price of the interventions (in €)</b>
2004	6.532	866.528,91	132,66
2005	8.991	1.259.932,65	140,13
2006	9.816	1.408.525,58	143,49
2007	9.733	1.484.249,95	152,50
2008	11.421	1.816.255,77	159,08
2009	11.008	1.926.665,00	175,02



## D. CONCLUSIONS :



Conclusions : WSF is a matter of values

## 1.EQUITY :

The contribution of high incomes is more important than the contribution of lower ones.

Conclusions : WSF is a matter of values

## 2. ETHICS : respect of everybody

More particular, it's a question of respect of the human condition of everybody : the basic right to drinking water.

Conclusions : WSF is a matter of values

### 3. Continuity :

The WSF is alimented every year,  
proportionally to the consumption.

Conclusions : WSF is a matter of values

#### 4. Accountability :

Every consumer knows his contribution to the WSF.

Conclusions : WSF is a matter of values

## 5. Sustainability :

This kind of help also contains some improvement of technical means, for example to regulate the consumption

# Thank you



# for your attention