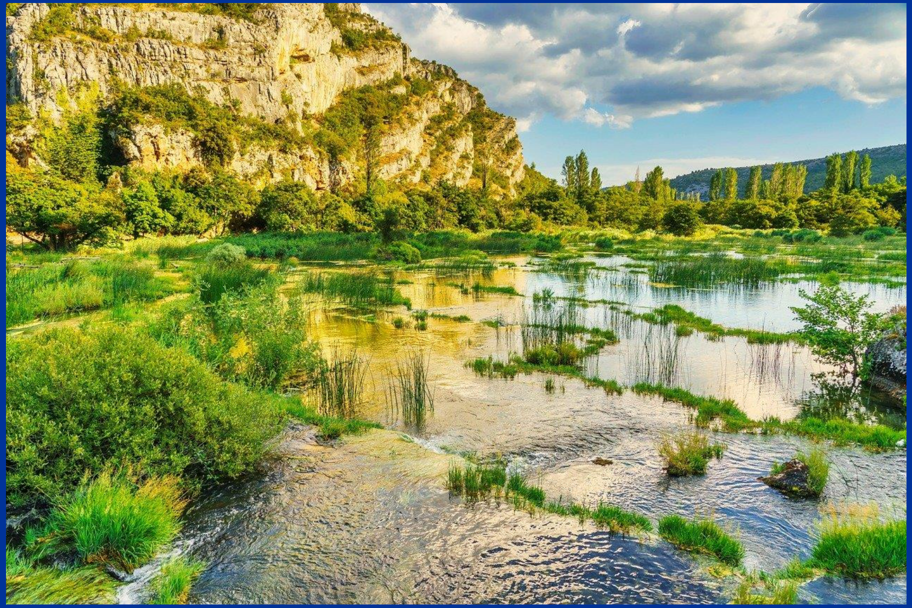
European Commission’s Report on the Implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive



Findings and Recommendations on the Water Framework Directive

Aquaculture Advisory Council, WG 2 “Shellfish”,3 June 2025

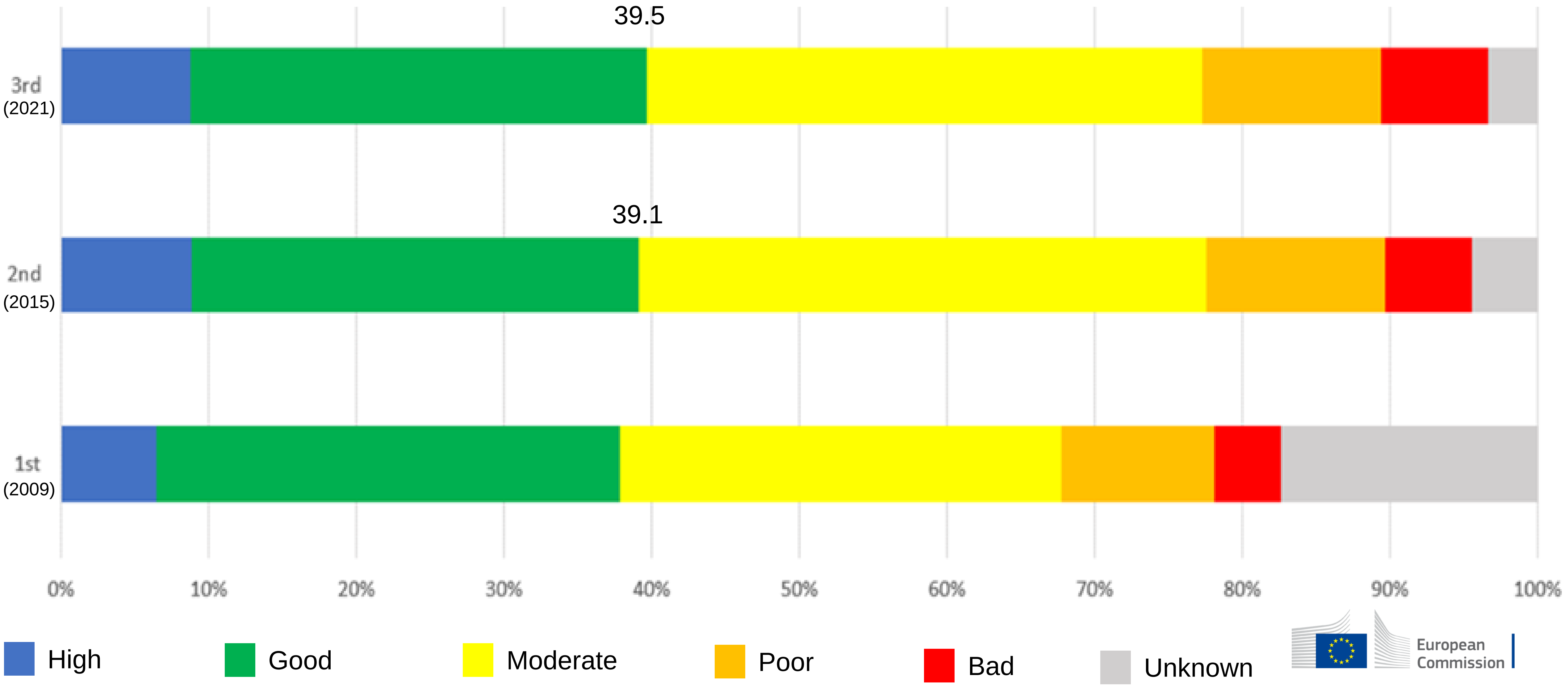
Directorate-General for Environment, Water Resilience and Circular Economy

European Commission

Context

- Publication on 4 February 2025,
- The published reports cover :
    - the implementation of the Water Framework Directive during the 3rd RBMP
    - The implementation of the Floods Directive during the second FRMP
- EU-level report: [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0002 - EN - EUR-Lex]
- Member-State levels assessments: [Implementation Reports - European Commission]
- Countries which reported their 3rd RBMP late are not included in the analysis : Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia

Ecological status / potential of surface waters



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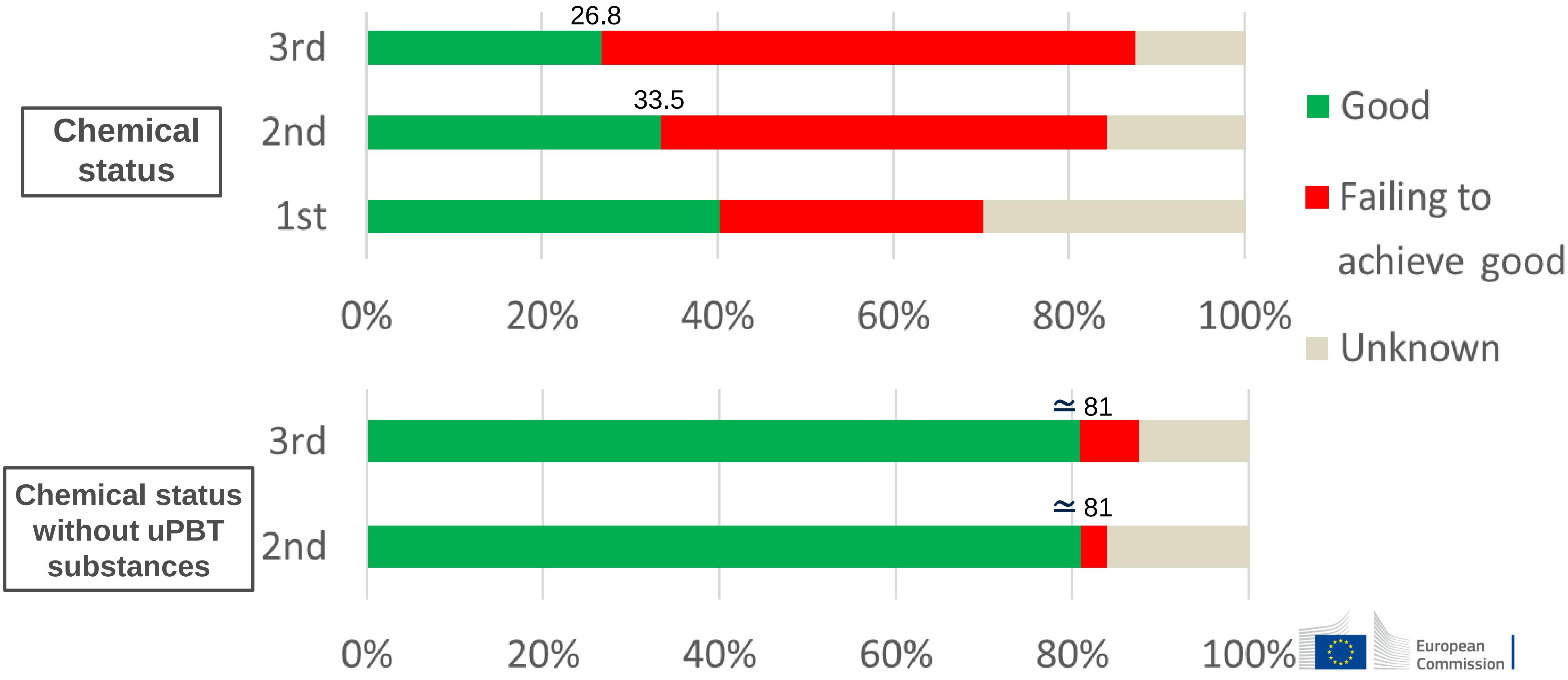
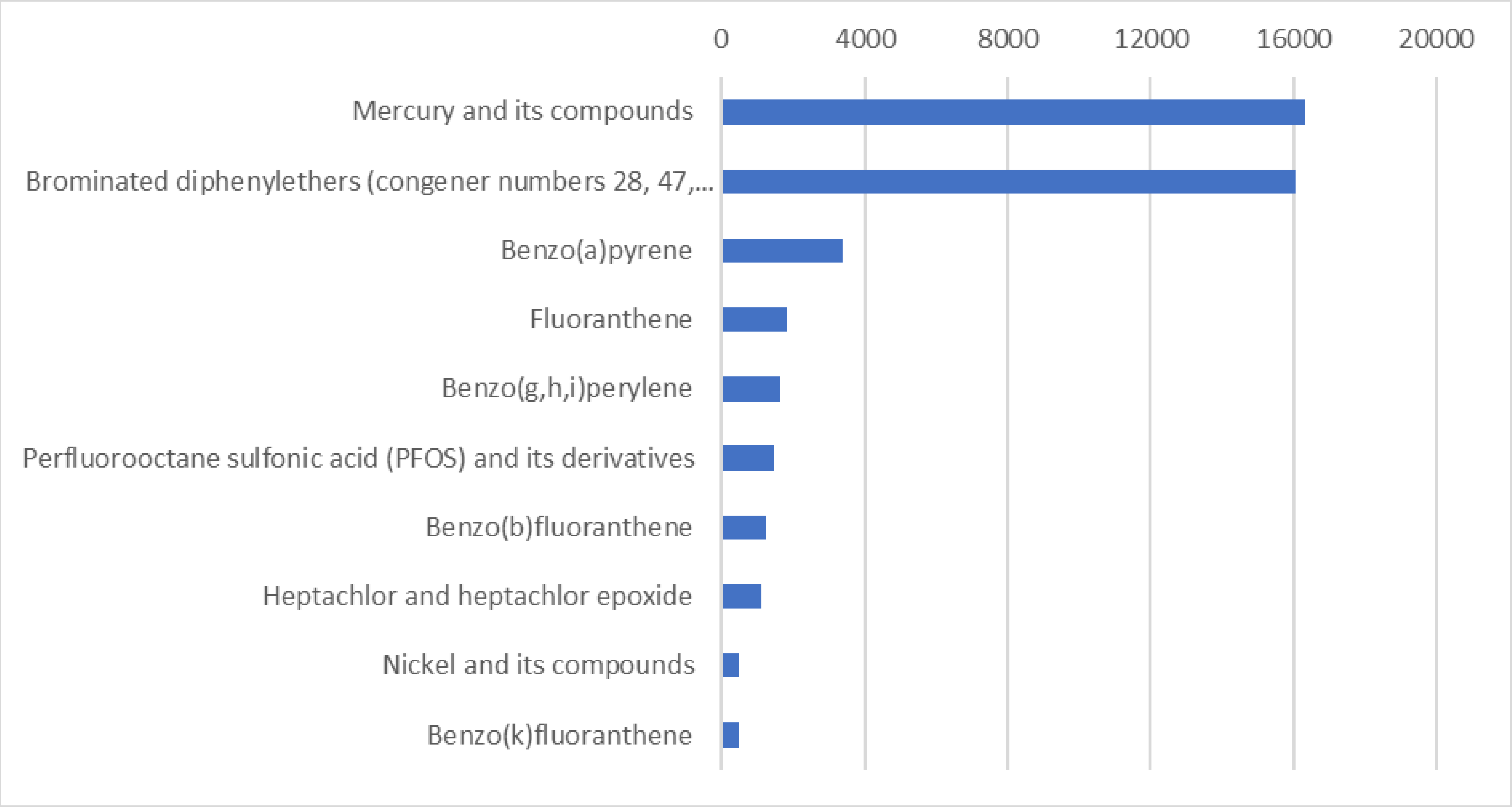
Chemical status of surface waters

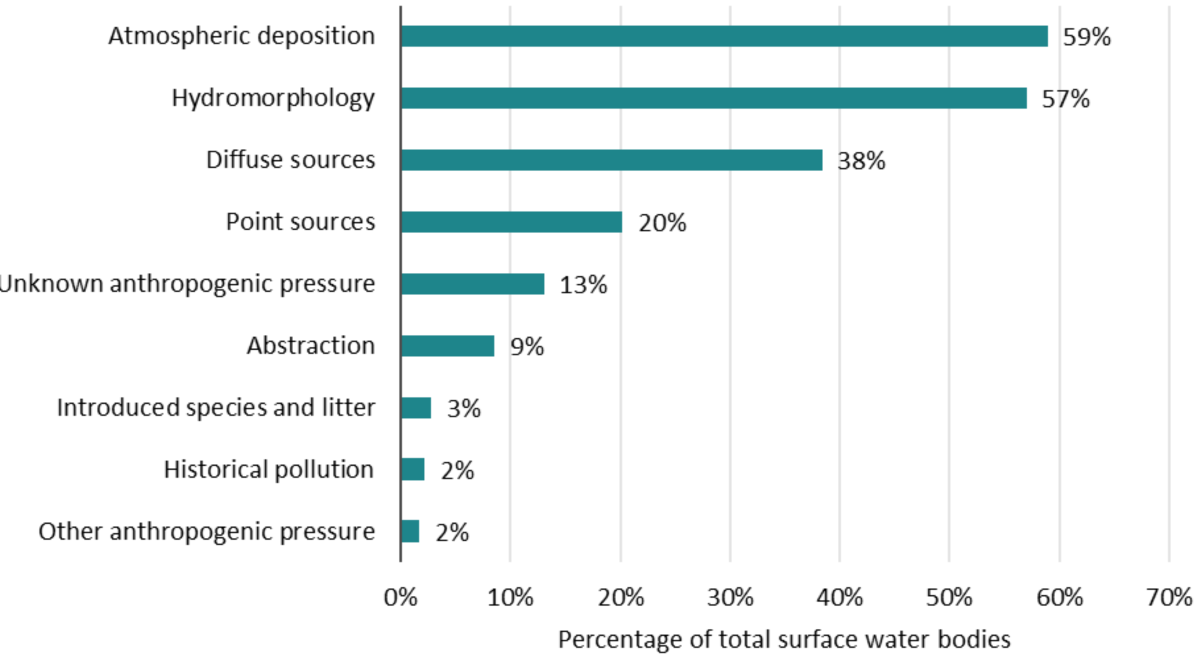


Top priority substances in surface waters

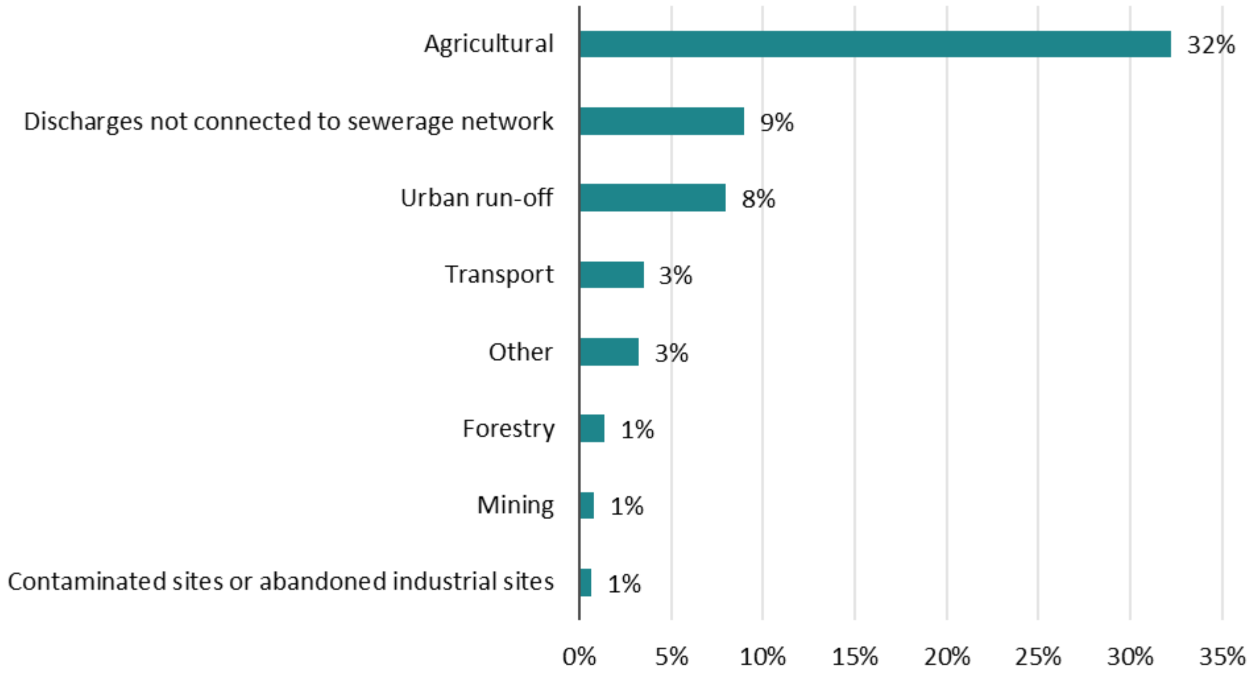


Pressures on the status of surface waters

Top 10 pressures



Main sources of diffuse pollution (other than atmospheric)



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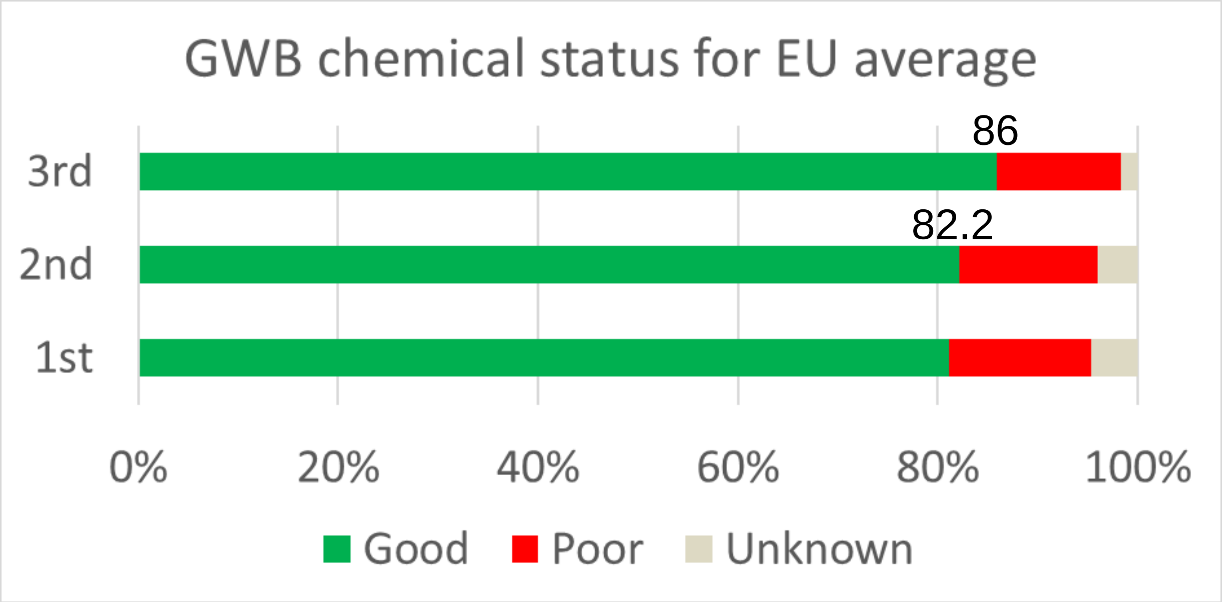
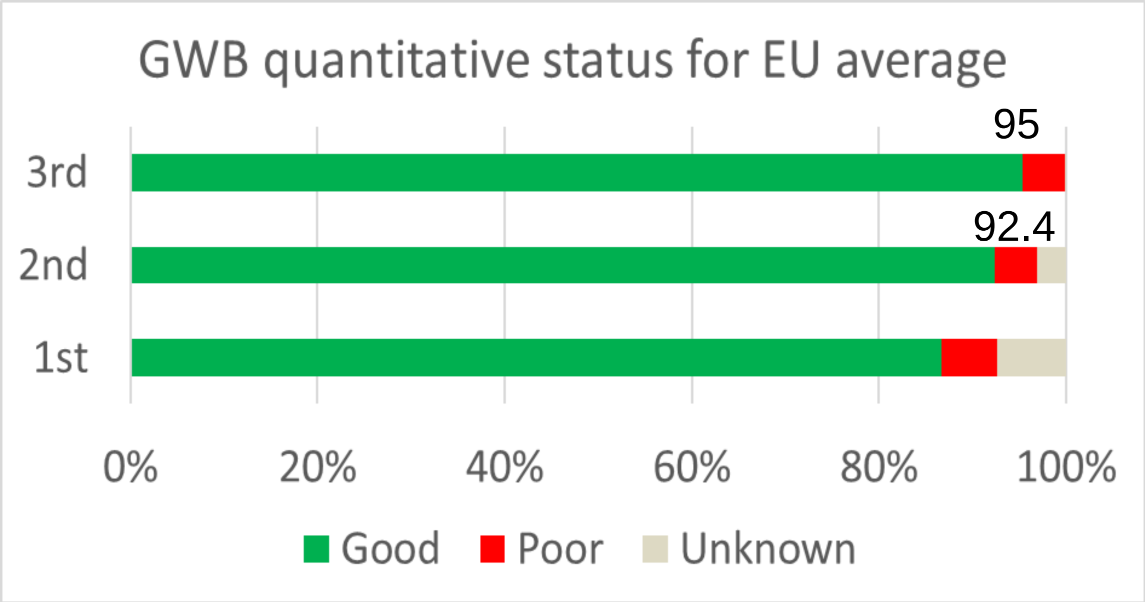
Groundwater





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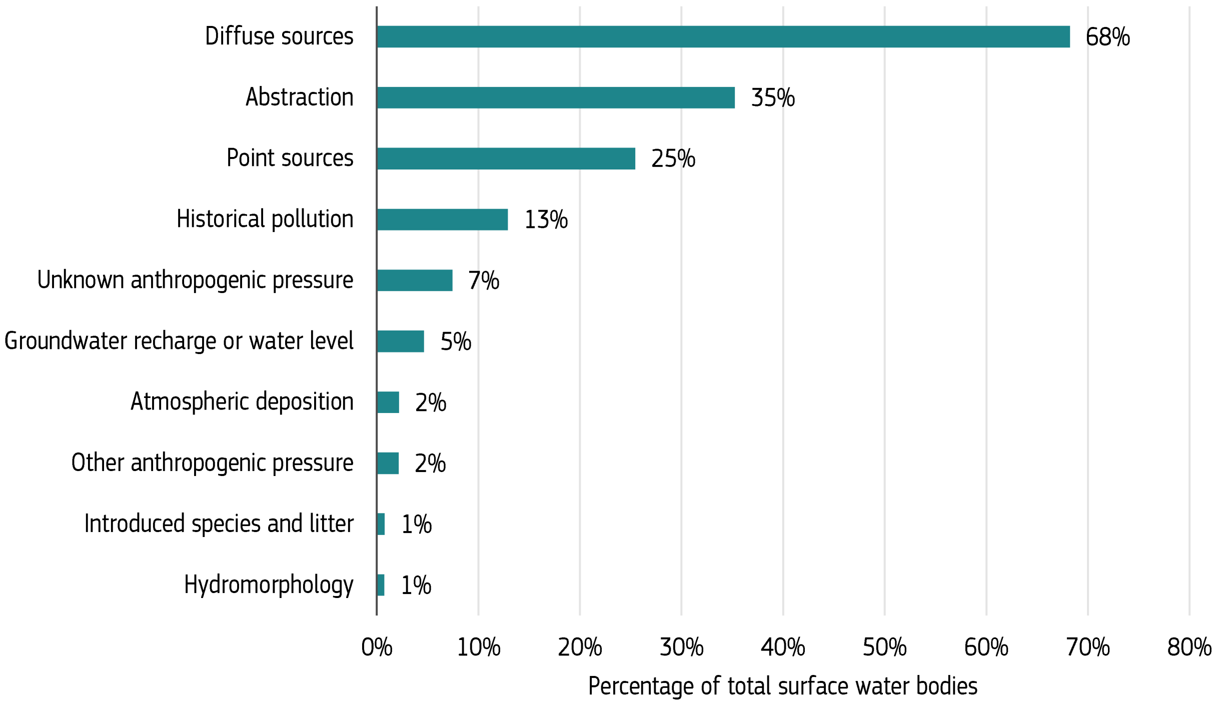
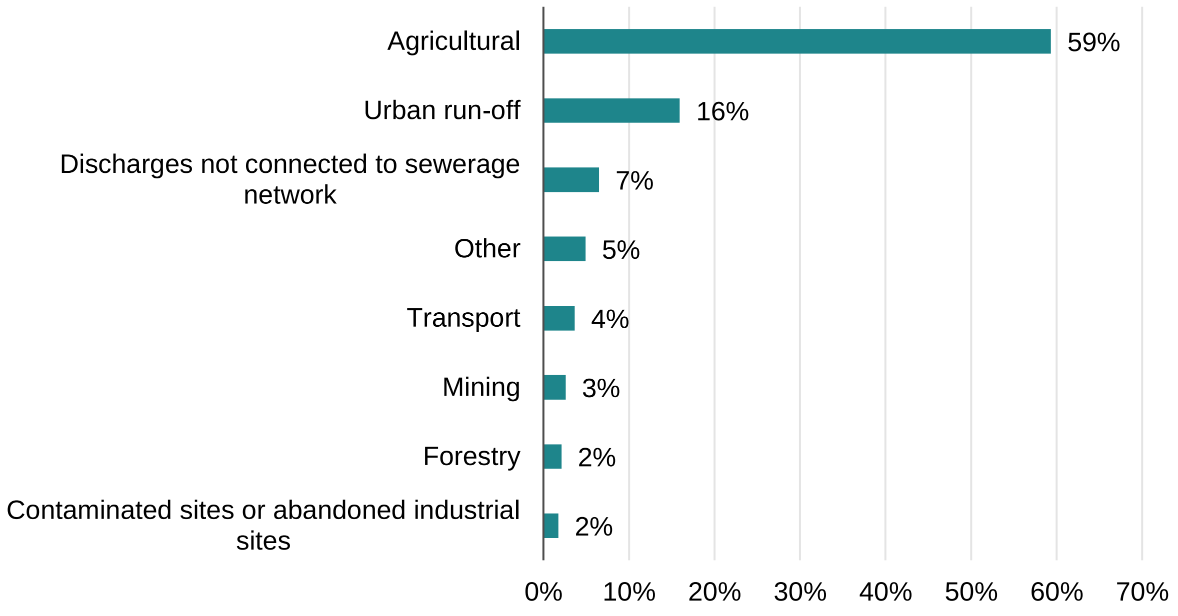
Groundwater

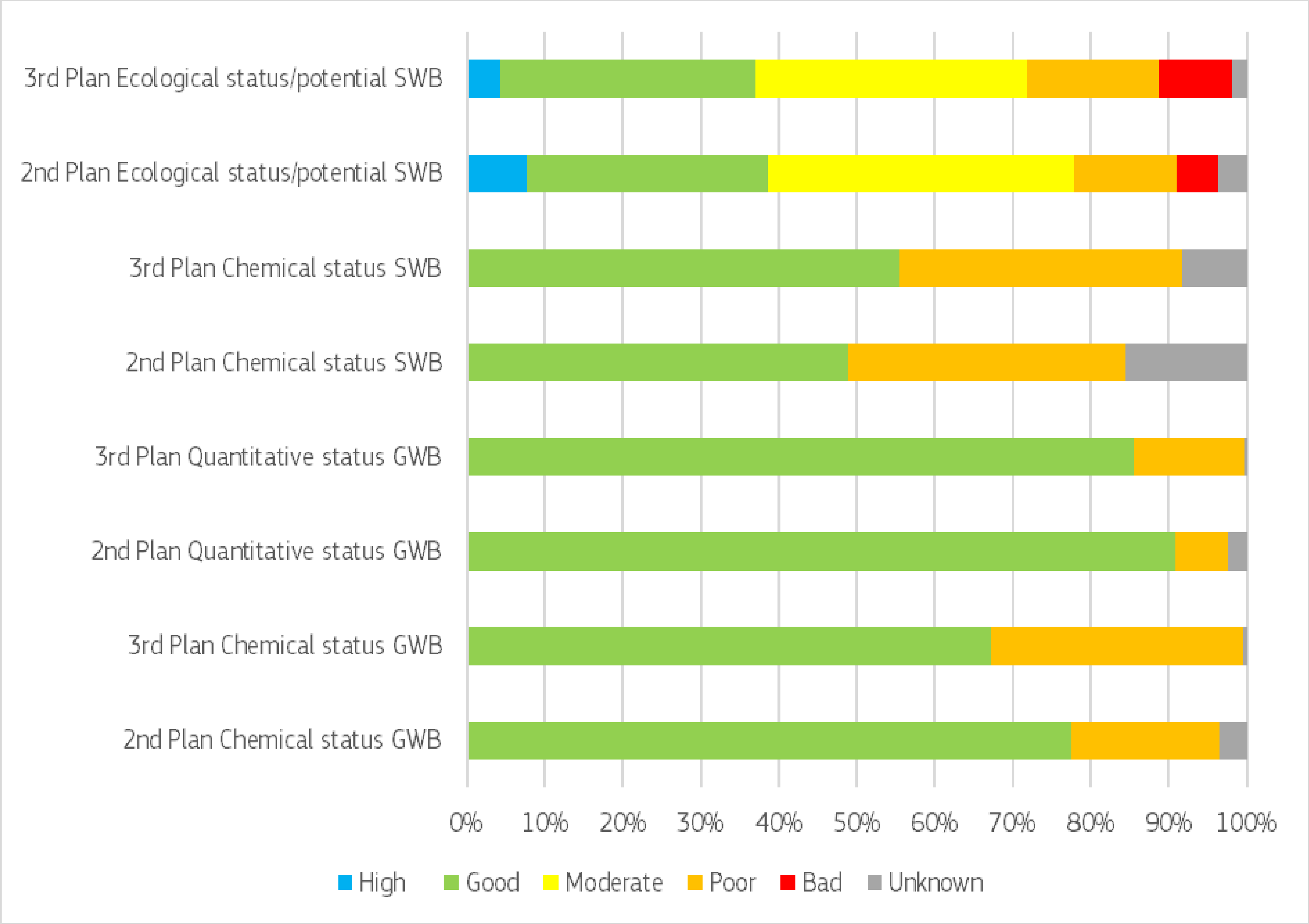
Top 10 pressures



Main sources of diffuse pollution (other than atmospheric)



Status of water bodies in protected areas in 2nd and 3rd RBMPs



Designation of protected areas does not seem to bring about the expected improvements on the state of waters

Countries which designated specific protected areas for aquaculture

- For shellfish :
  - Croatia
  - France
  - Italy
  - the Netherlands
  - Poland
  - Romania
  - Spain

- For freshwater fish:
  - Croatia
  - Italy
  - Latvia

Comes with additional objectives going beyond good status (Additional standards which might be inspired from the now repealed European shellfish and fish directives, e.g. microbial standards)

Mentions of aquaculture in the country specific reports

<u>Romania :</u>

- All additional objectives going beyond good status for shellfish areas (microbiological standards) have been met

- Aquaculture is the third most common reason for designation of water bodies as heavily modified, behind flood protection and hydropower, and before drinking water supply. (heavily modified water bodies come with lowered objectives taking into account that restoration measures must not threaten some anthropic uses, e.g. aquaculture)

- Forecasts show that water demand for aquaculture is expected to increase by 16% by 2030 in comparison to 2020.

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Mentions of aquaculture in the country specific reports

Italy :

- Fish farms mentioned as a driver for abstractions threatening good quantitative groundwater status, alongside public water supply, industry, agriculture, hydropower, water cooling.

Mentions of aquaculture in the country specific reports

Spain :

- Aquaculture mentioned as one of the drivers of hydromorphological alteration.
- Monitoring of shellfish waters has improved since the 2^{nd} RBMP

Mentions of aquaculture in the country specific reports

France :

- The Commission recommends France to step up the efforts to achieve the additional objectives set for shellfish areas

Assessment of the 3rd RBMPs : Key conclusions

On monitoring

- Overall knowledge and monitoring of water bodies has increased (geographic coverage, number of quality elements and of priority substances)

- Gaps in monitoring certain substances in some MS
- Differences in methodology (frequencies, parameters) ➔ Comparability issues

Assessment of the 3rd RBMPs : Key conclusions

On ecological status

ACHIEVEMENTS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT…
➢ **Noticeable improvement at the level of individual quality elements** ➢ **Moderate or small improvement in ecological status observed in some MS (but worsening in other MS)**	But… ➢ Work on assessment methodologies remains incomplete. ➢ Eutrophication and hydro-morphological pressure continue to have a major impact. ➢ Abstraction pressures ➢ Artificial barriers to continuity ➢ More mitigation measures needed, as well as work on permitting regime for abstraction, water pricing, and ecological flows

Assessment of the 3rd RBMPs : Key conclusions

On chemical status

ACHIEVEMENTS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT…
➢ **Significant worsening for surface waters, slight improvement for groundwater** ➢ **Better knowledge may play a significant role in the worsening of surface water status** ➢ **Without uPBT, chemical status of surface aters is stable**	But… ➢ More decisive action needed on uPBTs and other priority substances. ➢ Limited progress in quantitative gaps assessments to better tackle pollution from nutrients and pesticides.

Assessment of the 3rd RBMPs : Key conclusions

On quantitative status

ACHIEVEMENTS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT…
➢ Overall, good quantitative status appears secured (95%), but there are large differences across MS ➢ More systemic consideration of climate change impacts ➢ More countries have adopted drought management plans and some have adopted overall national water strategies	But… ➢ Over-abstractions reported as being responsible for failure to achieve environmental objectives on a significant portion of water bodies. ➢ Permitting/prior authorization regimes should be strengthened in several MS ➢ Unauthorised/illegal abstraction remains an issue ➢ not all Member States adequately consider the needs of groundwater-dependent ecosystems

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Key recommendations clusters

Next steps

Structured dialogues

- Bilateral meetings between the Commission and each Member State in the course of 2025 and 2026
- To work on enhancing the implementation of the EU water acquis
- First at technical level, then at commissioner/minister level, with commitments

Next steps

Water Resilience Strategy

- Publication planned for June 4th 2025
- Aims at achieving a water resilient Europe by 2050, working on 3 main objectives :
  - Restoring and protecting the broken water cycle
  - Building a Water smart EU Economy
  - Ensuring clean and affordable water and sanitation for all

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