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Revisit of the Danish River Basin Management Plans 2021 – 2027 (RBMP3)

Dear Ms. Manfredi, dear all,

To follow-up on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, I would like to update you on the process with the revisit of the Danish River Basin Management Plans 2021-2027.

In July, the Permanent Secretary for the Danish Ministry of Environment informed Director General Florika Fink-Hoijer on the status of implementing measures for coastal waters based on the *Agreement on a Green Denmark* which was agreed upon by the Danish Government and Stakeholders on 26 June.

On 18 November, the Government and majority of the Parliament agreed on 'The Agreement on Implementation of a Green Denmark' to put on top of the tripartite agreement. In between the two agreements, a new Ministry of Green Transition has been established with just one task and one task only – to implement that agreement. Now we have a concrete masterplan and secured broad political consensus for how to reach good ecological status in the fjords and coastal waters.

Central to the agreement is a large-scale conversion of the use of the Danish land whereby a significant part of the arable land will be used for other purposes, e.g. forestry. In total, approx. 390.000 hectares will be taken out of agricultural production. The funding that has been set aside for this initiative is 5,7 billion EUR. And lastly, more than 10 % of the agricultural land will be transformed into nature.

Based on the agreement, we believe we have made a huge step towards achieving good ecological status in coastal waterbodies by the end of 2027. Prior to 2027, we expect to be on target with the implementation of the necessary nitrogen measures

with respect to the majority of all coastal waters in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

As for the remaining coastal waters, the measures will be initiated already by 2024 and 2025 and carried out continuously before 2030.

We realize that this is past the 2027-deadline. However, the scale of the task is so significant that a longer-term plan is necessary. It is not possible to reach the objectives for the remainder of the coastal waters before the end of 2027.

Additional measures for the other parts of the 3rd RBMP, i.e. water courses, lakes and groundwater, have been decided at the political level. This means that new and additional measures will be implemented in order to comply with the Water Framework Directive. Thus, Denmark is spending more than 345 million EUR on water courses, lakes and groundwater during the planning period for the 3rd RBMP alone.

The updated plans ensure restoration of additional 2.000 km water courses and removal of 750 barriers. Combined with the measures already introduced in stage 1 of the 3rd RBMP, the 3rd RBMP restores 7.500 water courses and removes approx. 1.500 barriers. In the revisit it has also been decided to address the problematic situation with phosphorous in lakes. The current phosphorus ceilings will be lowered with 1 kg/hectare annually in 2025 and 2026. In 2027, a new phosphorus regulation will be decided upon.

It is not possible to ensure that all measures have been implemented before 2027. Instead, a plan that outlines the measures that will be implemented in 2033 and later has been agreed upon. Like on coastal waters, this is not in compliance with the directive. Therefore, we look forward to the structured dialogue the Commission will initiate on the handling of the areas where we do not expect to reach good status by 2027.

The updated plans will now undergo a second public consultation for a period of 6 months. Thus, the plans will not be fully operational until, expectedly, October 2025. We will of course continue to update you and your staff on the progress with the revisit of the River Basin Management Plans.

Let me ensure you that the state of our waters is very high on the agenda in Denmark. There is a strong political will to make the next three years count, so that we will see a substantial breakthrough in the measures that are put in place.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Sincerely yours,

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