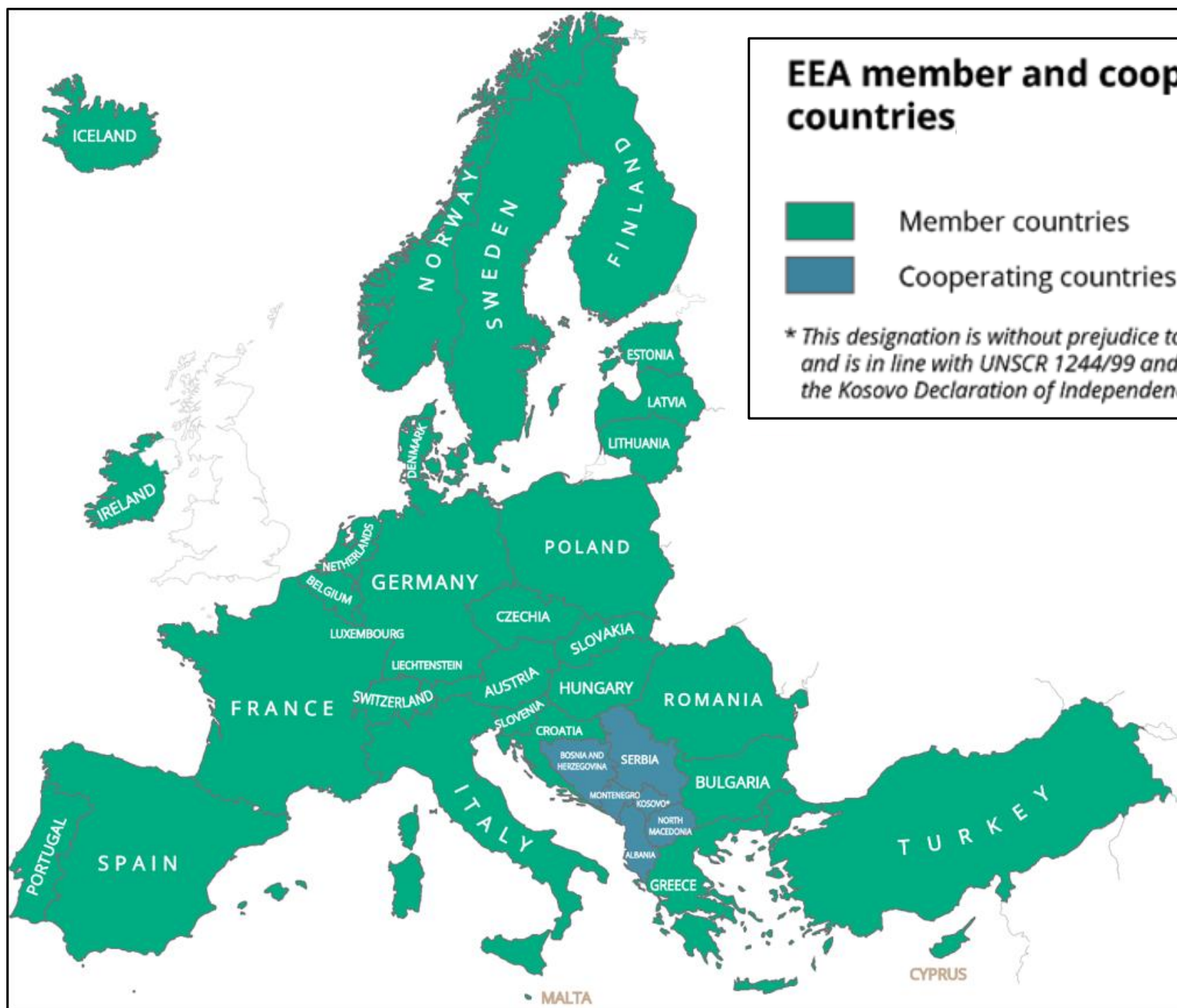


# Diffuse urban surface water pollution

Caroline Whalley, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025



## EEA member and cooperating countries



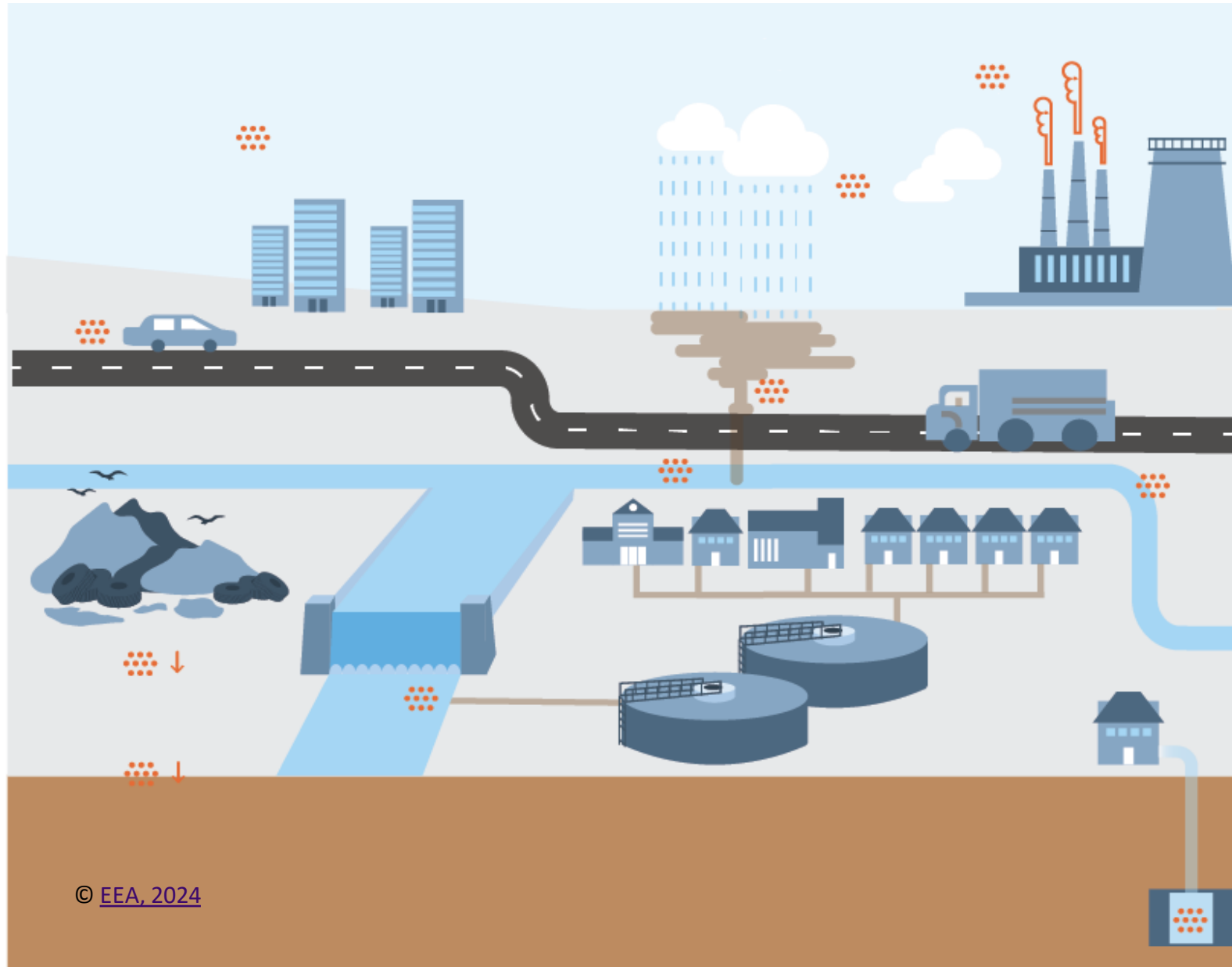
Member countries



Cooperating countries

*\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.*

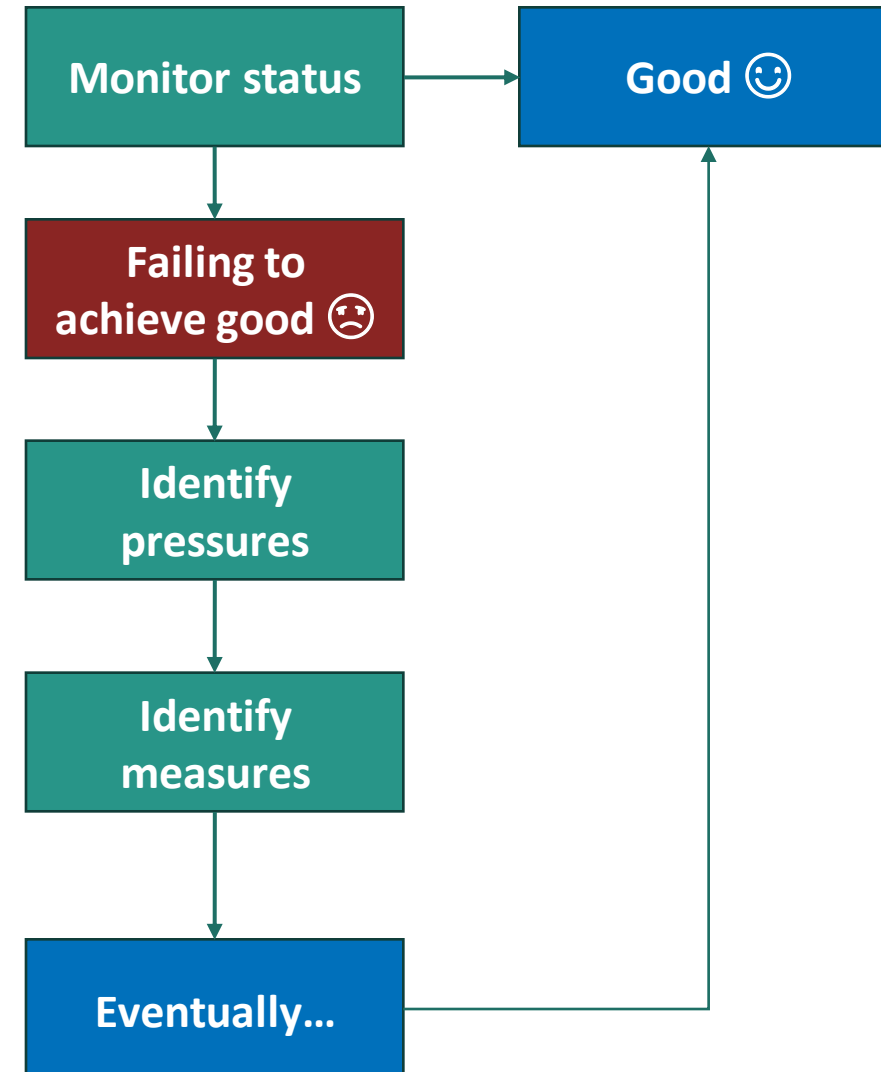
# Urban pollution pressures on water



# Water Framework Directive – Member State reporting for 2021\*

- 30% surface waters in good chemical status
- 38% surface waters in good or better ecological status
- 78% groundwaters in good chemical status

## Logic of WFD process



\* 26 Member States (Finland did not report electronically to EEA)

# Water Framework Directive – Member State reporting for 2021

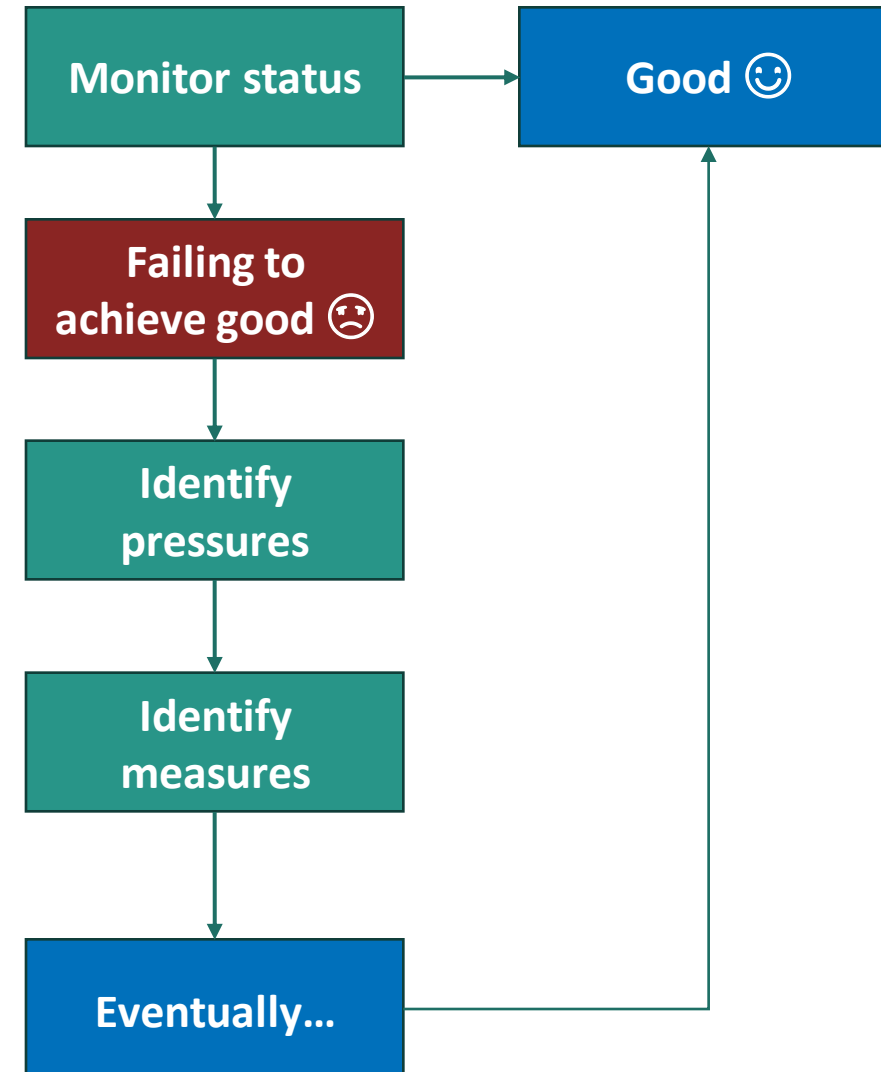
- 30% surface waters in good chemical status
- 38% surface waters in good or better ecological status
- 78% groundwaters in good chemical status

River Basin Management Plan reporting:

**Point – Storm overflows** - Overflows from separated or combined sewers identified as point sources

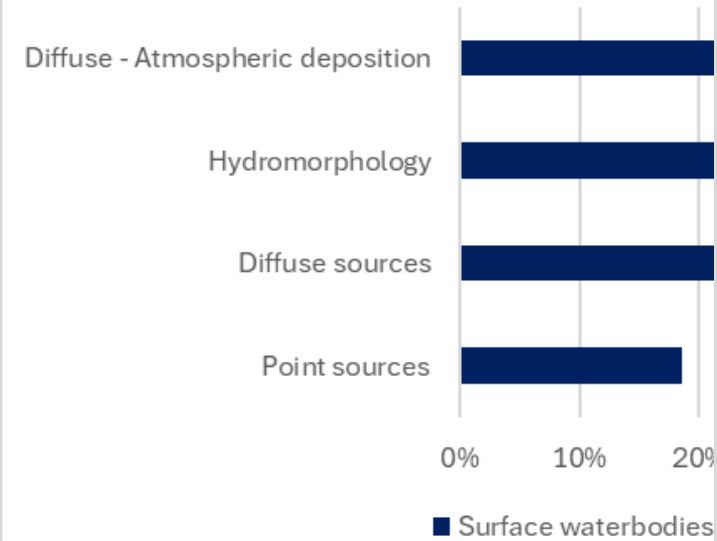
**Diffuse - Urban runoff** - Storm overflows and discharges in urbanised areas not identified as point sources

## Logic of WFD process

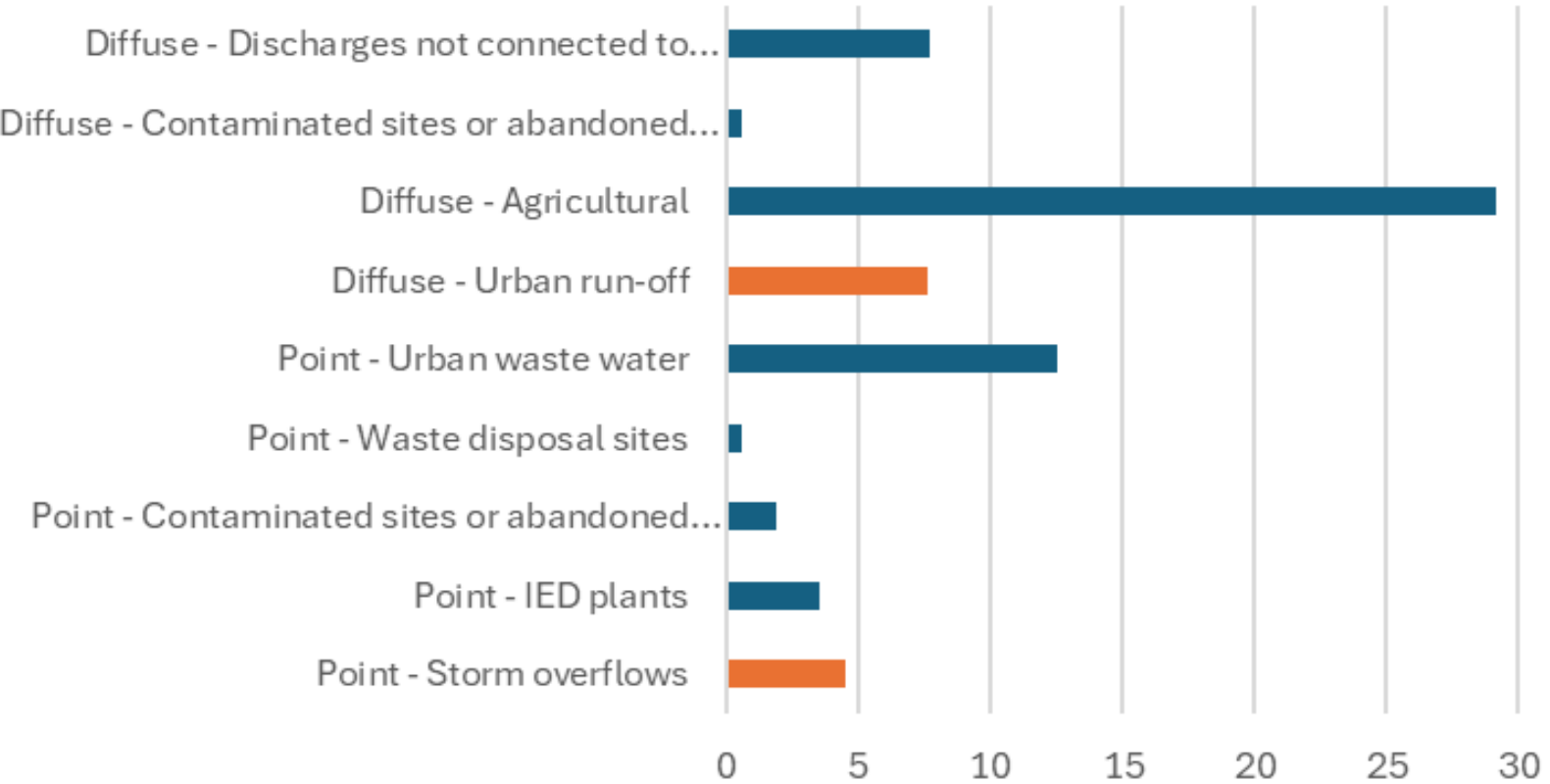


# Pressures on surface water bodies

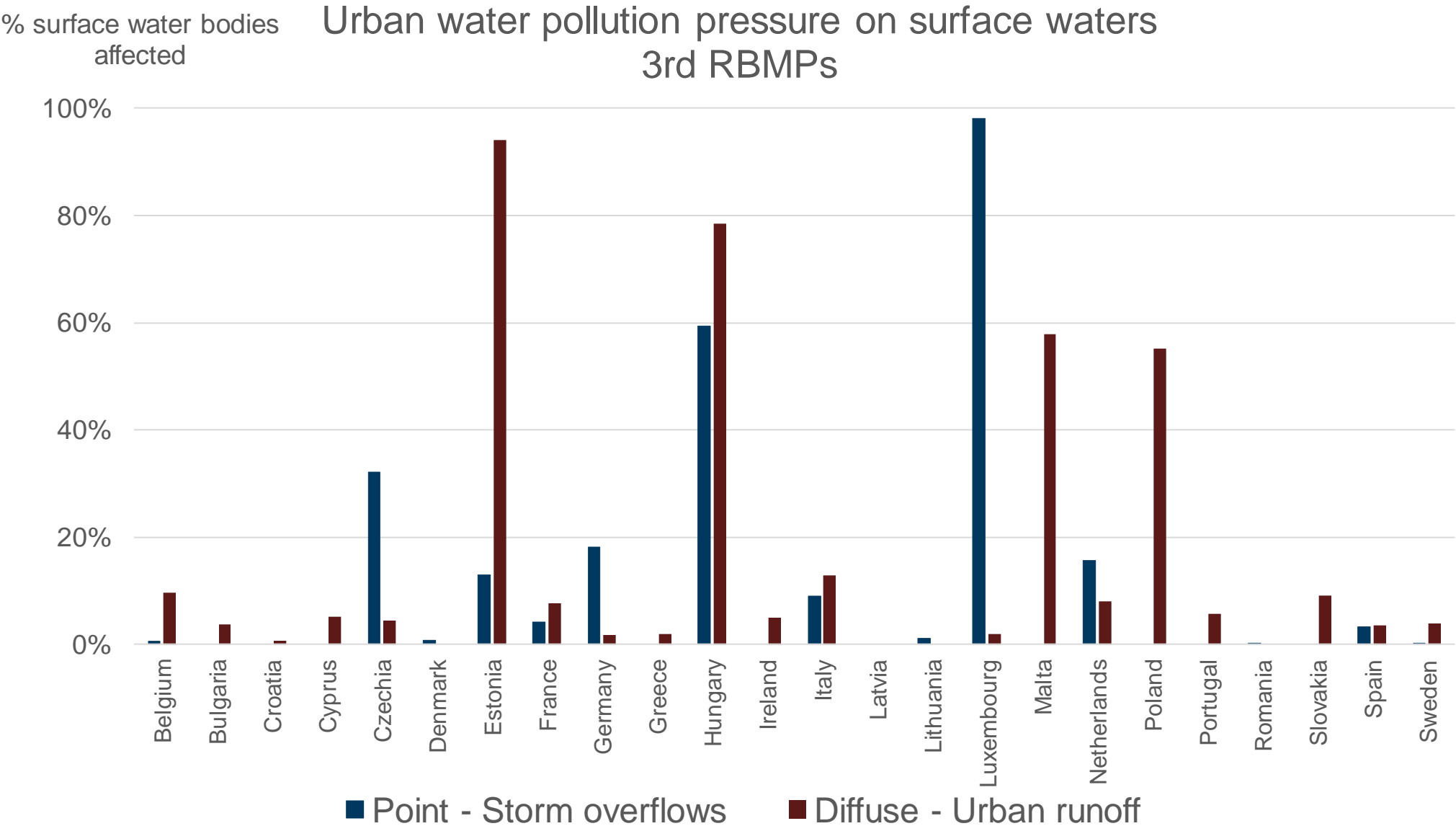
Major pressures on surface waters in the 3rd River  
Basin Management Plans



% surface water bodies affected



# Pressures on surface water bodies



# Revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, 2024



# Revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, 2024

- **Art 5** – Requirement for integrated urban wastewater management plans (urban areas over 100,000pe by 2033, smaller areas risk assessed eg environment or human health, by 2039)
- Measures should reduce pollution from storm water overflows and that from separately collected urban runoff
- Plans to include measures to prevent pollution at source and favour nature-based solutions over establishment of grey infrastructure.
- Measures could include: e.g. natural water retention; appropriate treatment of runoff or overflows resulting from first rains.



# Looking forwards...

- As point sources addressed, diffuse pollution becomes increasingly significant
- Climate change – more intense precipitation, erosion
- Increased urbanisation
- Local solutions to address (multiple) local needs – eg flood alleviation, blue/green space
- Challenge of implementation of revised UWWTD



• Thank you!

[eea.europa.eu](https://eea.europa.eu)