

# Contents

<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>16</b>
1.1. Context and purpose of this assessment report .....	16
1.2. Approach used in the report .....	16
<b>2. What are nutrients? .....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1. Definitions .....	18
2.2. Terrestrial ecosystems .....	18
2.3. Surface fresh waters .....	18
2.4. Marine and coastal waters .....	19
2.5. The choice of nutrients considered in this report .....	19
<b>3. Sources of nutrients .....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	21
3.2. Driving forces and pressures .....	21
3.3. Consumers and industry .....	23
3.3.1. Level of activity .....	24
3.3.1.1. Households .....	24
3.3.1.2. Industry .....	25
3.3.2. Technology variables .....	25
3.4. Agriculture .....	26
3.4.1. Level of activity .....	27
3.4.2. Technology variables .....	27
3.4.2.1. Fertiliser application – nutrient balances .....	27
3.4.2.2. Leaching of nitrate .....	28
3.4.2.3. Phosphorus run-off .....	29
3.4.2.4. Emission of ammonia .....	29
3.5. Emission of nitrogen oxides from transport and power plants .....	30
3.6. Fish farming .....	31
3.6.1. Level of activity .....	31
3.6.2. Technology variables .....	31
3.7. The significance of different sectors .....	31
3.7.1. Phosphorus .....	31
3.7.2. Nitrogen .....	32
<b>4. What constitutes an excess of nutrients? .....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1. A working definition .....	34
4.2. Excessive nutrients with direct effects .....	34

4.2.1.	Ammonium .....	34
4.2.2.	Nitrate .....	35
4.2.3.	Other nutrients .....	36
4.3.	Eutrophication .....	36
4.3.1.	Definition and approach .....	36
4.3.2.	Aquatic photosynthesis .....	37
4.3.3.	Still waters .....	38
4.3.4.	Rivers .....	41
4.3.4.1.	Mechanisms .....	41
4.3.4.2.	Perturbations because of river eutrophication .....	41
4.3.5.	Estuaries .....	42
4.3.6.	Marine waters .....	44
4.4.	Summary .....	46
<b>5.</b>	<b>Status and impacts in lakes and reservoirs .....</b>	<b>47</b>
5.1.	Characterisation of European lakes and reservoirs .....	47
5.2.	Nutrient concentration in lakes and reservoirs .....	49
5.2.1.	Reference levels of phosphorus .....	49
5.2.2.	Observed phosphorus concentrations .....	51
5.3.	Ecological state in lakes and reservoirs .....	54
5.4.	Impacts due to eutrophication in lakes and reservoirs .....	58
5.5.	Conclusions .....	59
<b>6.</b>	<b>Status and impacts of nutrients in rivers .....</b>	<b>60</b>
6.1.	Characteristics of European rivers .....	60
6.2.	Criteria for assessment of nutrient levels in running waters .....	62
6.2.1.	Reference values and criteria for nutrient assessment .....	62
6.2.1.1	Assessment values for nitrogen compounds .....	63
6.2.1.2	Assessment values for phosphorus .....	63
6.2.1.3.	Chlorophyll reference values .....	64
6.3.	Methods for the evaluation of nutrient related nuisances throughout Europe .....	64
6.4.	State and trends of nutrients in European rivers .....	64
6.4.1.	Nitrogen compounds .....	64
6.4.1.1.	Nitrate .....	64
6.4.1.2.	Ammonium and un-ionised ammonia .....	70
6.4.2.	Phosphorus compounds .....	71
6.5.	Eutrophication of European rivers .....	76
6.6.	Conclusions .....	78
<b>7.</b>	<b>Status and impact on marine and coastal waters .....</b>	<b>81</b>
7.1.	Characteristics of Europe's seas .....	81
7.2.	Criteria for assessment of nutrient levels in transitional, coastal and marine waters .....	82
7.3.	Nutrient concentrations in Europe's seas .....	82

7.4.	Loads of nutrients discharged into Europe's seas .....	84
7.4.1.	Introduction .....	84
7.4.2.	Direct discharges and riverine inputs .....	85
7.4.3.	Atmospheric deposition .....	88
7.5.	Eutrophication of Europe's seas .....	89
7.5.1.	North Sea and north-east Atlantic Ocean .....	89
7.5.2.	Baltic Sea .....	90
7.5.3.	Black Sea .....	92
7.5.4.	Mediterranean Sea .....	92
7.6.	Conclusions .....	92
<b>8.</b>	<b>Status of terrestrial ecosystems .....</b>	<b>94</b>
8.1.	Introduction to terrestrial environments .....	94
8.1.1.	Species and ecosystems endangered by excessive nitrogen deposition .....	94
8.1.2.	Effects of excess nitrogen on plant functioning .....	94
8.1.3.	Effects of excess nutrients on species composition in ecosystems .....	95
8.2.	Geographical distribution of terrestrial environments .....	98
8.2.1.	The land cover/land use of Europe .....	98
8.2.2.	Calculated critical loads and exceed-ances for nitrogen and for acidity .....	98
8.2.3.	Critical load mapping .....	98
8.2.4.	Ecosystem threats .....	100
8.2.5.	Threats to sites and species of special conservation interest .....	101
8.3.	Empirically derived critical loads of nitrogen for terrestrial ecosystems .....	102
8.3.1.	Tree health .....	102
8.3.2.	Ground-living and epiphytic lichens and algae .....	102
8.3.3.	Forest ground vegetation, macrofungi and mycorrhizas .....	103
8.3.4.	Heathlands .....	103
8.3.5.	Species-rich grasslands .....	104
8.3.6.	Empirical critical loads for terrestrial ecosystems .....	104
8.4.	Effects of increased nitrogen availability on soil fauna .....	104
8.5.	Trends in the atmospheric deposition of nutrients .....	104
8.5.1.	Model calculated European trends in deposition .....	106
8.5.2.	Measured time series .....	107
8.6.	Monitoring of forest health .....	108
8.7.	Effects on nitrogen cycling at integrated monitoring sites .....	110
8.8.	Wetlands .....	111
8.8.1.	Geographical distribution of wetlands .....	111
8.8.2.	Protection of wetlands .....	112
8.8.3.	Empirically derived critical loads of nitrogen for wetlands .....	112
8.9.	Liming of shallow poorly buffered lakes .....	114
8.10.	Conclusions .....	114
<b>9.</b>	<b>Protective and curative measures.....</b>	<b>115</b>
9.1.	Strategic goals .....	115
9.1.1.	International goals for reducing inputs to sea .....	115

9.1.2.	EU requirements .....	119
9.1.3.	Other international agreements.....	120
9.1.4.	National and local goals .....	120
9.2.	Measures to reduce point source inputs.....	121
9.2.1.	Urban waste water .....	121
9.2.2.	Industrial emissions to water .....	124
9.2.3.	Financial incentives – charging schemes .....	124
9.3.	Measures to reduce inputs from agriculture.....	125
9.3.1.	EC agricultural policy .....	125
9.3.2.	The Nitrate Directive .....	125
9.3.3.	PARCOM, HELCOM and MEDPOL.....	126
9.3.4.	Fertiliser taxes .....	129
9.3.5.	Less intensive farming .....	129
9.4.	Measures to reduce inputs from products .....	129
9.5.	Measures to reduce inputs from atmospheric sources .....	130
9.5.1.	Point source emissions .....	131
9.5.2.	Emissions from vehicles .....	131
9.6.	Measures to safeguard terrestrial habitats .....	132
9.6.1.	Environmental impact assessment.....	132
9.6.2.	Special sites .....	132
9.6.3.	Buffer zones and water protection zones.....	132
9.7.	Measures to remediate high nutrient levels .....	133
9.8.	Summary .....	136
<b>10.</b>	<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>138</b>
10.1.	Assessment problems .....	138
10.2.	State and trends in ecosystems.....	138
10.2.1.	Still waters .....	138
10.2.2.	Rivers .....	139
10.2.3.	Coastal marine waters .....	139
10.2.4.	Terrestrial ecosystems .....	139
10.3.	Policy effectiveness and the way forward.....	140
10.4.	The way forward .....	142
10.4.1.	Broadening the range of instruments .....	142
10.4.2	Integration with other policies .....	143
10.4.3.	More effective implementation .....	143
10.4.4.	Common targets and principals .....	143
10.4.5.	Sustainable development .....	143
10.5.	Needs for future policy assessment.....	143
<b>11.</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>		<b>154</b>