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Wetter, Wilder, and Yet Drier... Perspectives on Maneuvering Water Licenses in Times of Climate Change

Tuesday 26 August 2025

University of Strathclyde (TL 423) 5 – 6 PM

Water licenses, as traditional legal instruments to regulate water flow and control water usage, are being challenged by a higher degree of uncertainty in future water management due to climate change. While licenses are not the primary instrument for adapting to climate change, regulating them is essential for achieving adaptive and sustainable water management. How can these instruments be designed to better adapt to climate change? This contribution will discuss the legal framework for adaptive water management, aiming to improve the regulation of licenses in the context of climate change. The author argues that incorporating flexibility into the drafting of water licenses is crucial, as revising and revoking existing licenses to align with modern technological standards and evolving environmental conditions has proven to be challenging.



Key words: adaptive water management, EU Water framework directive, water licenses, climate change, Nordic water legislation