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PILLS - Background

Recently an increasing number of findings have been published about pharmaceutical residues to be found in the water system. In the context of human medicine, people are used to consuming pharmaceuticals in private households, hospitals or other care facilities. Parts of the active pharmaceutical ingredients excrete the body and reach the public sewer systems. But also modern biological wastewater treatment technology is not able to eliminate all micropollutants; some residues pass the sewage plant and reach the aquatic system. The concentration of residues in surface or drinking water is not critical for humans according to the present level of knowledge. Nevertheless the interdependencies in aquatic ecosystems and the consequences for biodiversity are not clear.

There are several steps necessary to reduce the emissions in the water system: At the production process of the pharmaceuticals, more attention should be paid regarding biodegradable active pharmaceutical ingredients. Another step is a different handling of pharmaceuticals; trying to use less pharmaceuticals or environment-friendly products whenever possible. Furthermore the wastewater treatment technology should be adapted to the new challenges.

For further details, please have a look at the PILLS film also: [PILLS-Film](#)

PILLS - objectives

- To find out which treatment methods are best suited to reduce pharmaceutical residues and antibiotic resistant bacteria in wastewater
- To gain more knowledge about the question whether and under which circumstances local treatment,

for example at hospitals, is reasonable

- To increase awareness of this problem across Europe

Since the concentration of pharmaceutical residues at point sources (such as hospitals or nursing homes) is considered to be comparatively high, they test new wastewater treatment technologies at these points and hope to find the optimum conditions here for the removal of the residues.

PILLS - key data

Six partners coming from six European States - Germany, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, United Kingdom and France - are working together in the PILLS project.

The PILLS project runs from September 2007 until December 2012. It has a total budget of approximately 8 million Euro; 50% of the budget is co-financed by the ERDF.

The PILLS partnership benefits from the INTERREG IV B programme, which is a financial instrument of the European Union`s Cohesion Policy. It funds initiatives, which support transnational cooperation to tackle common challenges between European regions.