

EU dredging rules make effective flood prevention in Britain impossible

A letter to the Sunday Telegraph – 13th December 2015

SIR – It is not surprising that the rivers in Cumbria have flooded again (report December 6), so soon after the last inundation in 2009.

The Environment Agency cites all kinds of reasons for this. However, it neglects to mention that its policy is dictated by the EU Water Framework Directive, adopted 2000, which places constraints on the dredging of rivers.

Putting in flood defences does not infringe the policy, as long as the river is not dredged or embanked. Hence, for example, the erection of expensive and ineffective glass panels on the wall next to the Greta river in Keswick. Here there has been absolutely no dredging of the gravel that has raised the river bed considerably over the last decade.

There is nothing unusual about heavy rainfall in Cumbria; what is unprecedented is the refusal of the authorities to dredge the watercourses to carry it away.

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