

Brussels, 16.02.2025

Subject: Meeting request to discuss EU water policy

Dear Commissioner ROSWALL,

As we stand at the crossroads of the triple planetary crisis¹ the world is facing, your leadership in championing the resilience of our most precious resource - water - is not just a necessity; it's an urgent call for the future of our planet and its people.

Each corner of Europe is increasingly affected by either too much, too little, too polluted water, or a combination thereof. Together, these water challenges constitute a water crisis that is finally coming to the attention of the public and European policymakers as it puts at risk the availability of a resource that is essential to our society, economy, and environment.

The call for an EU Blue Deal² and an action plan by the EU Economic and Social Committee as well as EU Committee of the Regions³, which has resonated widely across Europe has culminated in the announcement of a Water Resilience Strategy by President von der Leyen in the Political Guidelines 2024-2029⁴. The recent European Environment Agency (EEA) report *Europe's state of water 2024*⁵ also reminds us of the urgency of ensuring our resilience against water-related extreme events and ensure sustainable freshwater supplies.

As Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, you will lead the work on the Water Resilience Strategy. Your mission will pave the way to a social, environmental and just transition. Yet, such a transition cannot happen without overarching and holistic actions in close cooperation with the College of Commissioners; each should value water in their respective portfolio.

Therefore, we, a group of European members-based organisations representing a wide range of water stakeholders across the entire value chain (associations, CSOs, NGOs, academia, large water users, SMEs, water operators, and local authorities), kindly request a meeting with you to discuss the following points linked to your mission:

- **The scope of the Water Resilience Strategy and the urgent need of prioritising water** during this mandate, ensuring it is fully integrated into other initiatives, such as the Clean Industrial Deal, the Circular Economy Act, and the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Climate Adaptation Plan and mitigation policies;

¹ Climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

² European Economic and Social Committee, Declaration for an EU blue Deal, 2024 <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/documents/declaration-eu-blue-deal> ² European Economic and Social Committee, Declaration for an EU blue Deal, Brussels, 2024 <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/documents/declaration-eu-blue-deal>

³ We refer to two options: Committee of Regions, *Creating an EU Blue deal from an agriculture and rural development perspective across EU Regions*, 2024 <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions/cdr-5513-2023> and Committee of Regions, *Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal*, 2024 <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions/cdr-5587-2023>.

⁴ European Commission, *Europe's choice: political guidelines for the next European Commissions 2024-2029*, 2024. https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

⁵ European Environment Agency. *Europe's State of Water 2024*, 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/europes-state-of-water-2024>.

- **The need to advance water efficiency measures in all sectors**, including buildings through metering and smart technologies, ensuring the efficient use of resources, reducing the environmental footprint of the built environment and alleviating water stress in urban areas;
- **The process towards the UN Water Conference 2026**, the delivery of the EU targets and objectives from the UN Water 2023 Conference commitments, and those defined in the EU Water Vision 2050 and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda as well as the European Global Water Leadership;
- **The role of the European water-related Research and Innovation projects** in connecting both with the local and regional authorities and citizens' science;
- **The place of water policy in inclusive decision-making and implementation dialogues** and the reporting on this policy in the annual progress report on enforcement and implementation;
- **The need for a collaborative approach to deliver the full water-energy-food nexus** potential, engaging institutions, Member States, industry, and civil society;
- **The implementation of the Zero-pollution ambition and the Water Framework Directive** and other legislation of the water acquis;
- **The financial support to deliver the required investment across the value chain** and related infrastructure to implement and comply with the European water acquis, including public and private finance investment, and ensuring smaller scale local projects are funded as well and reconcile environmental sustainability, social equity and economic efficiency;
- **The recognition and incentivisation of nature-based solutions and urban green infrastructures** considering the benefits for multiple European strategies (e.g. water retention and recycling, storm water management, alleviation of urban heat island effect and increased biodiversity).

We look forward to your views and remain at your disposal for a meeting to exchange further on those questions and discuss ways the signatories can be supportive.

Kind regards

On behalf of the signatories.

Durk Krol
Executive Director
Water Europe
Durk.krol@watereurope.eu
+32 473805042

List of signatories

