

To the attention of Executive Vice President Teresa Ribera Rodríguez
Executive Vice President for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition

Brussels, 16.02.2025

Subject: Meeting request to discuss EU water policy

Dear Executive Vice President RIBERA RODRÍGUEZ,

As we stand at the crossroads of the triple planetary crisis¹, 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 Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition, you will lead the work on promoting the **EU's green growth, circular economy and industrial strategy**. Your mission will pave the way to a social, environmental and just transition. Yet, such transition cannot happen without overarching and holistic action on the **Water Resilience Strategy**, in close cooperation with Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy and the whole College of Commissioners; each of them 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, 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:

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 scope of the **Water Resilience Strategy** as an integral part of EU's competitiveness agenda and the urgent need to prioritise water during this mandate, ensuring it is fully integrated into other initiatives, such as the **Clean Industrial Deal**, the **Circular Economy Act** and the **EU Climate Adaptation Plan**;
- 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 **place of water policy in the implementation dialogues** and the reporting on this policy in the annual progress report on enforcement and implementation through fostered coordination between EU, national, local priorities for co-effective water efficiency measures;
- 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 and public-private investment, and to reconcile environmental sustainability, social equity and economic efficiency;
- The support of the **European Competitiveness Fund** in unlocking research and development of clean tech fostering the EU's strategic objectives;
- The necessity of dealing with **quantitative and qualitative aspects** of water for energy-intensive industries as well as recognising the critical role of water for net-zero technologies;
- 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, climate change adaptation, 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 we, the signatories, can be supportive.

Kind regards

On behalf of the signatories

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List of signatories

