



» **Annual Report**
2020-2021

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Reflections on our year

When you expect the inevitable, the unforeseen occurs. For years now, the inevitable has been climate change and water stress, but the unforeseen was COVID-19. 2020-2021 was marked by these words and like everyone else, we had to adapt and innovate. And we did it at scale and pace and we are proud of the way we did it and we are also proud to present you this year's annual report that if anything else, is a real demonstration of how stronger we emerged from the COVID19 challenge and determined to turn adversity into opportunity for us and our community.

Water Innovation Europe 2020 was the first conference turned into a digital edition that exceeded our expectations. Over 500 participants joined us for 5 days online during an innovative water week. More than 200 B2B meetings took place and participants visited 15 virtual booths at the digital exhibition area. Since then, we kept organising our Water Knowledge Europe editions online with great success and Water Innovation Europe 2021 is now coming up in a digital format, again, under the topic 'EU Water Smart Society for a Global Leadership' on 14-18 June 2021. Digital has come to stay and building on the Covid-experience and our continuous pursuit to better serve our members, we keep working on our own digital strategy to see how it can create a kind of digital twin of our services.

This year, we also adopted a new governance model. In November 2020, a new Water Europe Executive Committee (We ExCom) was elected. The Executive Committee's role is to support and guide the Water Europe President and the Executive Director in the execution of their tasks. According to the new governance adopted at the general meeting in June 2020, the Water Europe Executive Committee consists of the Water Europe President, the Executive Director and five Vice-Presidents who are in charge of different portfolios according to the main priorities of Water Europe.

Within our advocacy programme, we worked hard to include the drivers for achieving a Water-Smart Society in EU legislation. We launched new publications, reports, and position papers. Within our collaboration programme, new Working Groups started, white papers were produced, new faces joined us. Within our market programme, we further developed our Water Oriented-Living Labs strategy and linked it with the International Water Dialogues initiative, and we could keep going on about 'we and us' but this is not to demonstrate how successful Water Europe managed to be one more year.

This is only a strong evidence that hard work and a united and committed network of members, ambassadors and collaborators became our own vaccine to the COVID-19 crisis and conditions imposed on us. We recognise and thank you for everything you have done for Water Europe this year and we hope you enjoy our annual report.



Durk Krol,
Water Europe Executive Director



Tomas Michel,
Water Europe President

2020-2021 Timeline: Our Year in Review



New publication:
WE contributions
to the European
Green Deal &
Horizon Europe

July 2020



Release of
Position Paper
'For a Green,
Circular & Smart
Urban Wastewater
Treatment
Directive'

Water Europe
Executive
Committee
Elected

**November
2020**



Weekly
Horizon Europe
Preparatory
Webinars with
more than 2.200
online viewers

**February
2021**



Release of
Position Paper:
Building on the
Water-Soil Nexus
for an integrated
& Circular
Economy

April 2021

2020

June 2020

500 participants
to Water
Innovation
Europe 2020

New WE board
elected



October 2020

240 participants
to Water
Knowledge
Europe Autumn
Edition: EU
Green Deal Call

Joint Statement
on Access
to Sanitation
released

December 2020

200 participants
to Water
Knowledge
Europe Winter
Edition: Horizon
EU

2021

January 2021

Release Position
Paper: Zero
Pollution Action
Plan



March 2021

Water Europe
Position Paper:
A New Industrial
Emissions
Directive

390 participants
to Water
Knowledge
Europe 2021
Spring Edition



May 2021

Biodiversity
Strategy
released: Shared
challenges
for Water &
Biodiversity
Conservation



WE Grow



“Water is of vital importance for all, literally – for the individual as well as for the society. In the awakening from the global pandemic and in the middle of a climate storm, our mission to build a Water-Smart Society is relevant now more than ever. I look forward to further strengthening Water Europe as an inclusive organization of committed members covering the whole spectrum of the water ecosystem in order to make our vision come true!”



by **Hans Goossens**,
First Vice-President

Since
2013

No membership
fee increases

23 new members on
average, every year

Represents a
turnover of
230€ billion



237 members

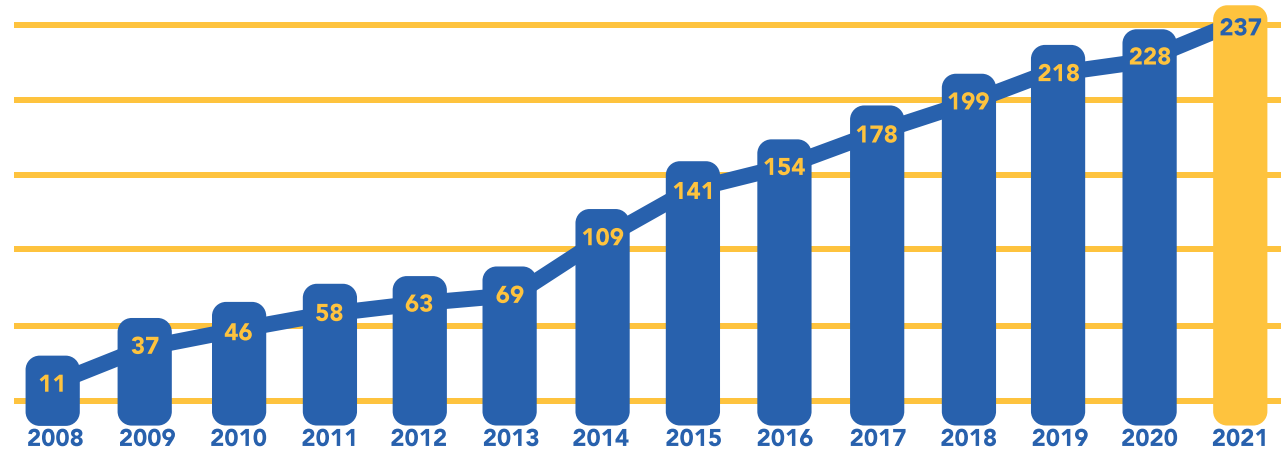
Workforce of
almost 1million
people



27 countries



Membership Growth



How does WE membership work?

WE is a value-based multi-stakeholder association that represents the full diversity of the water ecosystem. WE membership is segmented into different membership colleges in line with the diversity of the sector. The different colleges are in turn grouped in corporate members and associate members. Associate membership is open to a limited group of entities that do not qualify for corporate membership. Associate members have the same rights as corporate members with the exception that they do not pay a membership fee and in return have no say in the WE governance. The WE Board of Directors has the ultimate say on what membership college an aspirant member belongs to.

5 Corporate Colleges:

- College A: Multinational Corporations with water at the heart of their business model
- College B: Research & Technology Developers
- College C: Utilities
- College D: Suppliers & SMEs
- College E: Large Water Users

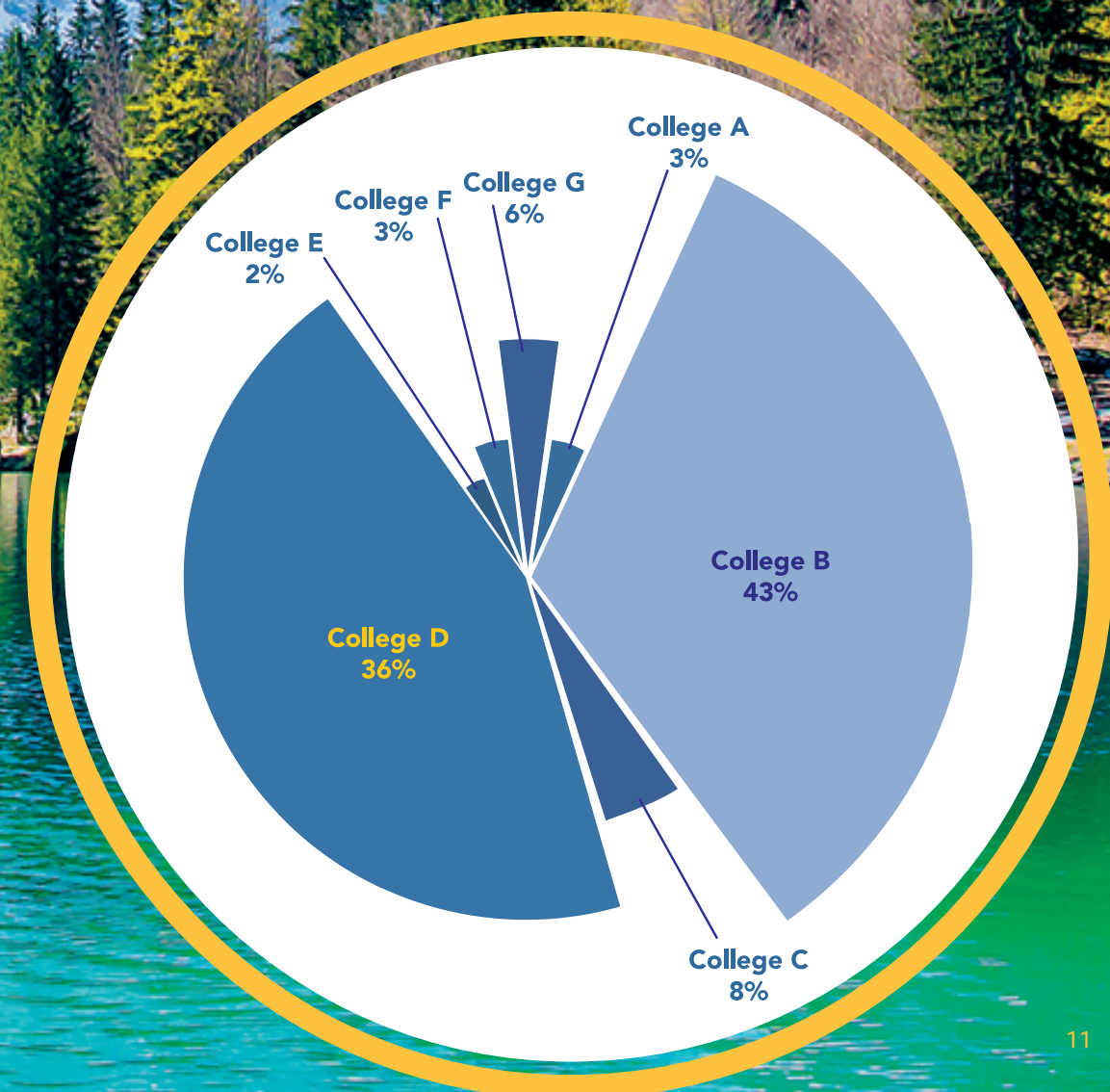
2 Associate Colleges:

- College F: Public Authorities
- College G: Civil Society Organisations

What's coming up?

Water Europe has started a Membership Experience Journey with the support of Capgemini in order to better understand the current and future needs per member segment in order to further improve the service to its members.

Our members per college





WE Collaborate

“A Water-Smart Society will only be achieved through open-minded people working together. Our progress is rarely hindered by technologies; it is usually limited by silo thinking, rigid mindsets, single-sided participation, resistance to change and lack of collaboration. I want to counter all that by promoting and investing in diversity, gender balance, people, innovation, nexus thinking, stakeholder engagement and co-creating of our water solutions is what will make the whole water ecosystem thrive and dominate.”



by **Chrysi Laspidou**,
**Vice-President for
Technology & Research**

What is the WE Collaboration Programme?

It allows our members to network, to exchange knowledge and experiences, and to collaborate along the water value chain by addressing common challenges, developing and implementing new solutions, and shaping successful project consortia.

Activities 2020-2021

01

2 New Working Groups



02

44 Working Groups Meetings



03

5 Workshops



04

3 Water Knowledge Europe editions



05

Launch of Water Projects Europe



06

7 Horizon Europe preparatory webinars



01

2 New Working Groups

The Smart Water Networks Sensors and Tools Working Group, led by Armando di Nardo (Med.Hydro) and Lydia Vamvakieridou (KWR), aims to identify the future trends in the water sensors sector contributing to enhance water services and solve water-related global challenges.



The Water and Public Health Working Group, led by Claudia Topalli (IDEXX) and Cristian Carboni (De Nora), aims at contributing to the achievement of a Water Smart Society in which the value of water is recognized and protected as a precious resource for human health and well-being.

02

44 Working Group meetings took place from June 2020 to May 2021 back-to-back to our three main Water Knowledge Europe editions in October 2020, December 2020 and March 2021.

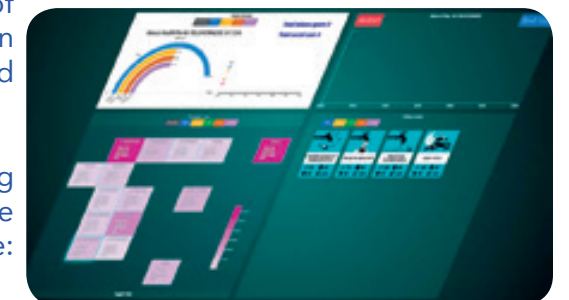


03

5 Collaborative Working Groups & Vision Leadership Teams Workshops



- 1 The Water Europe Working Groups Human Capital and NEXUS organised the workshop "Play to learn the Nexus Approach - Serious Game: learning for a resource-efficient and green economy". The Workshop showed how Serious Games can be used for purposes for education, decision making and public policy making.
- 2 The Water Innovation System Vision Leadership Team (VLT) organised the workshop "Beyond Innovation water landscapes: a synergic exploration towards a cross matched Water Innovation System VLT white paper", focusing on the opportunities given by highly transformative water innovations in the European scenario.
- 3 The Vision Leadership Team Value in Water realised the workshop "Discussion and elaboration of how the WE Working Groups see themselves represented in the topic Value in Water" with the proactive involvement of the Water Europe Working Groups.
- 4 The Workshop "Hybrid Grey and Green Infrastructures: setting the scene" organized by the WE Hybrid Grey Green Infrastructure Vision Leadership Team discussed with the European Commission representatives how the combination and enforcement of Nature Based Solutions (NBS), grey and green systems can lead to the most appropriate solutions: the hybrid grey and green infrastructures.
- 5 The Digital Water Vision Leadership Team and the Working Groups Human Capital and Water and ICT organised the workshop "Building a Water-Smart Europe in the Digital Age: Drivers, Barriers and Opportunities."



04

3 Water Knowledge Europe Editions 2020-2021

The WE Collaboration Programme of Water Europe organised 3 Water Knowledge Europe events in October and December 2020 and the Spring Edition in March 2021 with speakers from European Commission DG RTD, DG CONNECT and the Executive Agency for SMES (EASME).

The Water Knowledge Europe events provided a great support to the WE Members and non-members to create consortiums to react to the H2020 EU Green Deal and Horizon Europe calls for proposals. The WKE Spring Edition 2021 also introduced the new Digital Europe Programme, the the European Innovation Council (EIC) and LIFE Programmes 2021-2027.



05

7 Horizon Europe Preparatory Webinars

In the framework of WKE Spring Edition 2021, Water Europe organised seven free webinars to provide information and tips and tricks to the water stakeholders on the next water related calls for proposal of Horizon Europe.

The weekly webinars attracted more than 2.200 online viewers.



06

Launch of Water Projects Europe

In October 2020, a new Water Europe event saw the light: The Water Projects Europe event series made to foster collaboration and synergies between R&I projects working on specific topics.

Over the year, three Water Projects Europe editions took place in the context of the Water Knowledge Europe events in 2020 and 2021, with the participation of several EU funded projects and European Commission officers from various Directorates-General and Executive Agencies.

WATER PROJECTS EUROPE



The themes that the Water Projects Europe events focused were:

- **Industrial Water Reuse in the Circular Economy**
- **Digital Water for a Europe fit for the digital age**
- **Water in the Circular Economy Policy Agenda.**



**WE
Innovate**

“ We have decided to develop the instrument of a WELL: a Water Europe Living Lab. Together with our WE Vision Leadership Teams and WE ambassadors, it should help to build an inclusive Water-Smart Society in collaboration with the citizens of Europe. We will try to do this in Europe and beyond, together with parties outside Europe and with the use of digital means to get as close as possible to the citizens. **”**



by **Wim van Vierssen**,
Vice-President for Innovation

What is the WE Market Programme?

It enables our members to bring their research results and innovative solutions to the market in Europe and beyond.

Activities 2020-2021

01

A successful Water Market Europe edition



02

Digitalisation of Water Europe In Progress



03

Marketplace Tool is taking shape



04

Water-Oriented Livings Labs



01

A successful Water Market Europe edition

Water Europe organised Water Market Europe (WME) on **Digital and Cybersecurity solutions for Utilities and Industries**, considering that development of digital technologies is one of the top priorities for making Europe competitive in the global scenario of the water sector. WME 2021 brought together problems owners and solution providers from the Digital Water domain not only to facilitate the matchmaking between demand and offer of innovation but also to foster the digital and green transition for a Water-Smart Society.



02

Digitalisation of Water Europe In Progress

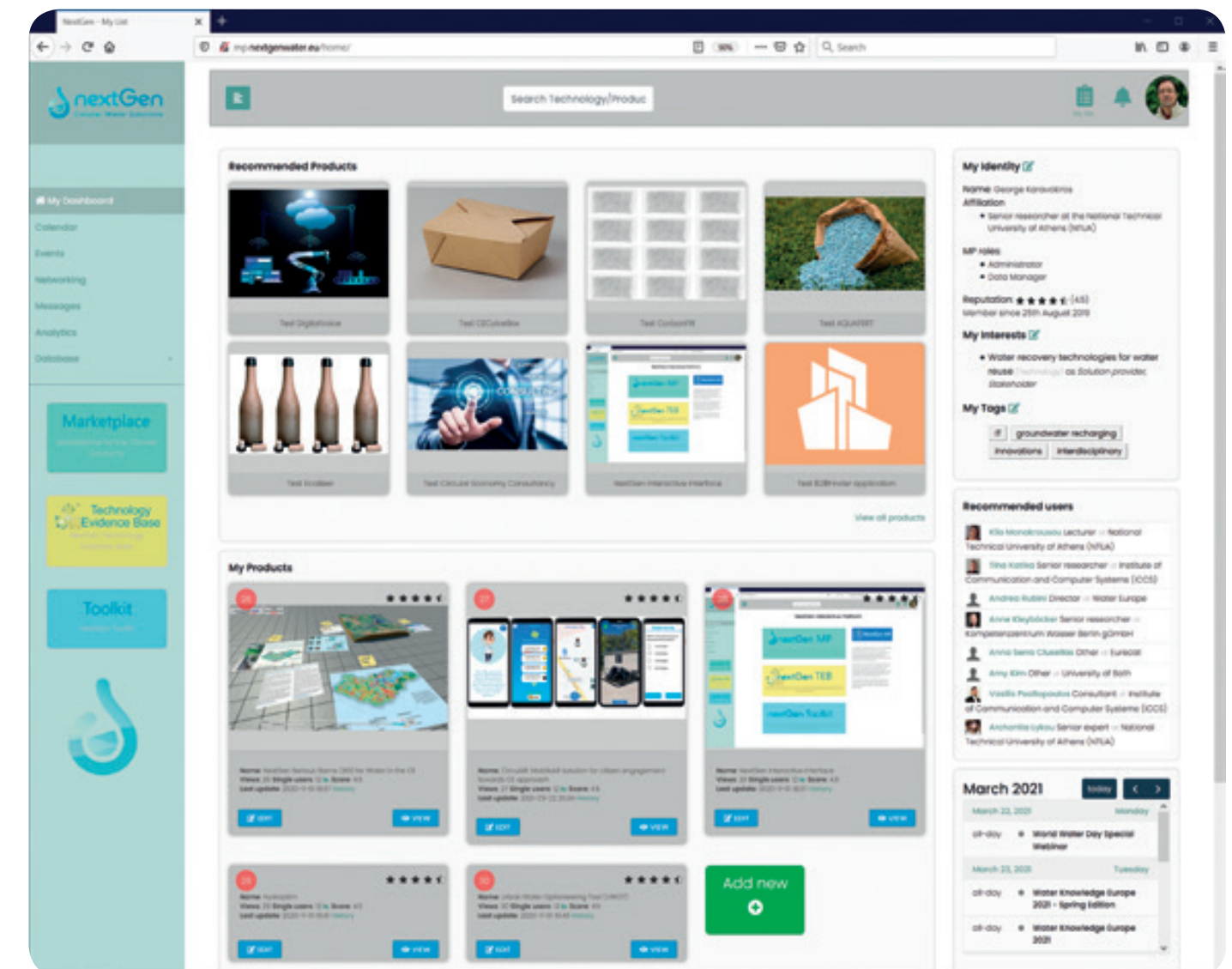
Building on the COVID-19 experience and in its continuous pursuit to better serve its members, WE will also develop its own digital strategy to see how it can create a kind of digital twin of its services.



03

Marketplace Tool is taking shape

Water Europe is partner of the Nextgen project (Towards a Next Generation of Water Systems and Services for the Circular Economy), which is developing the Marketplace platform that will be run by WE after the project completion. The Marketplace will be a new tool to support the WE Market Programme because it will host available technologies, tools, products, showcase successes, boost networking and bring together potential partners with common interests. It will also support the organisation of face-to-face or online meetings and events as well as foster fund and investment innovation.



In its Atlas of EU Water-Oriented Living-Labs (2019), WE has launched the WOLL concept as a key innovation tool for building a Water-Smart Society. In the atlas, WE has developed the WOLL methodology and made an initial inventory of existing initiative that match the WOLL definition. In the meantime, WOLLs have become fully included in our advocacy for water in European collaborative funding programmes. The WOLLs have also been included in numerous H2020 projects, including Ultimate, B-Water Smart, Water Mining, and Multisource. Over the last year, WE has been working on a new strategy for the WOLLs. It is built on 3 pillars:

- A further elaboration of the WOLL's methodology and inventory in the Atlas of EU Water-Oriented Living-Labs
- The creation of a WE WOLLs network
- The creation of a limited number of Water Europe Living Labs

WELLs will be legal entities that engage in a long-term relationship with Water Europe to implement the WE strategy on a Water-Smart Society. A WELL is based on a joint (WELL and WE) strategic plan, with two key dimensions as being crucial for its success: water-smart goals and citizen involvement. The role-out of this strategy will be overseen by the Vertical Vision Leadership Teams in coordination with the Vice-President Innovation and the Vice-President Research with the support of a WELLs-manager with support staff.



Digital Twin

WE foresee that the Digital Twin will become a key tool in the role-out of the WOLL strategy. The water sector is a capital-intensive sector due to the water infrastructure that is indispensable for water management. The Digital Twin Concept is an emerging paradigm that connects realization-management-maintenance and supports all phases in an integrated way. Digital Twins integrate artificial intelligence (e.g. Machine Learning) and domain models with real-time data to make living digital copies of the physical infrastructure. They change with their physical counterparts. A Digital Twin approach is used to evaluate design alternatives and perform virtual stress tests. They enable performance optimizations, to plan upgrades and carry out preventive maintenance during the realization and maintenance phase. In addition, they assist in the real-time operational control of water systems.



WE International Water Dialogues (IWDs)

WOLLs will also become the basis for the WE strategy to enter into relationships with parties outside Europe for the implementation of water technology and for the benefit of a Water-Smart Society. We aim to use the WOLLs-network to also connect WOLLs in the EU with similar initiatives outside the EU as well as facilitate a WELL initiative outside the EU. We envisage three geographical spearheads: European neighbours (theme: good neighbourship), commercially interesting markets (theme: high-tech benchmarking) and hotspots in a UN context (theme: international partnership). WE will organize the IWD implementation-oriented dialogues in coherence and synergy with the policy-oriented platform dialogues of the Commission.





WE Advocate

“To be impactful in Brussels, you need to have a compelling story backed up with solid facts and case studies and I believe Water Europe has a very good story to tell.”



by **David Martin**,
Vice-President for Advocacy

What is the Advocacy Programme?

It raises the awareness of the value of water for our society and economy and lobby for the inclusion of the drivers and enablers for innovative solutions in European policy making and legislation.

Activities 2020-2021

01

7 New Position Papers



02

WE: Let's join forces!



03

EC Expert Working groups



04

MEP Water Group Activities



05

WE Policy advisory committee



06

Water Innovation Europe 2020: A great success



01

7 New Position Papers



02

WE: Let's join forces!

Over the last year, Water Europe has joined structural and one-purpose coalitions to support their objectives on specific legislation or to recognise the true value of water. Collaboration is set in our DNA, mission, vision, values and objectives towards a Water Smart Society, and we can only achieve this long-term objective by gathering the water ecosystem and reaching out our sector. Coalitions are therefore a key instrument for us, and we will continue to join forces. Which were the two key coalitions of this year?

Coalition on Access to Sanitation

Co-signed by many of Water Europe members, Dominique Gatel presents the scope and objective of this coalition. «The Joint Statement for the Promotion of Access to Sanitation for All in Europe aims at guaranteeing access to safe sanitation services for everyone in Europe, since as many as 10 million people still lack access to safe sanitation services in the EU. To this end, the Statement proposes to include the Right to Sanitation in the revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, similarly as it was recently added to the Drinking Water Directive in an article promoting access to water with particular attention to the most vulnerable people. Adequate sanitation services for all citizens across Europe contribute to our quality of life.»



EU Water Alliance



In the course of this past year, the EU Water Alliance coalition managed to hold fruitful meetings with the cabinets of 15 European Commissioners, including a discussion with Environment Commissioner Sinkevičius. During these encounters the EUWA was able to promote its manifesto for a Water-Smart Society and circular economy, as well as give much needed visibility to water issues in portfolios distinct from environment and climate.

03

EC Expert Working Groups

During the last two years, Water Europe joined two EC expert groups on the Industrial Emissions Directive and the Water Framework directive. Water Europe is now entering in the activities of the WFD common implementation structure thanks to its representatives. In close collaboration with Water Europe, Dominique Gatel has also started to represent the voice of Water Europe in the art. 13 Forum on the industrial emissions directive.

04

MEP Water Group Activities

The MEP Water Group has recently been renewed, with MEP Pernille Weiss from the EPP taking over as chair of the group. In 2021 the new MEP Water Group has held its kick-off event, which saw the participation of Environment Commissioner Sinkevičius, followed by a webinar in collaboration with UNESCO and an event on energy efficiency with Energy Commissioner Simson.



05

WE Policy Advisory Committee



Water Europe's Policy Advisory Committee is in charge of supporting the Board in its activities regarding the legislative dossiers that Water Europe works on and the appropriate actions that need to be taken. In the past year the PAC has invited several EU officials to its meetings in order to discuss and gather information on relevant topics; among these are Joachim D'Eugenio from DG Environment, Anne-Katherina Weidenbach from DG ENER and especially Florika Fink-Hooijer, new Director General of DG Environment.

06

Water Innovation Europe 2020: A great success

The digital edition of Water Innovation Europe 2020 wrapped up successfully on the 26th of June 2020. During the innovative water week dedicated to 'A Water-Smart Society for a post-COVID19 Green Deal', over 500 participants joined the conference online across the whole week for 5 daily plenary sessions, 6 Water Europe Innovation Awards sessions, 2 side events, 16 Working Group meetings, over 200 B2B meetings, 15 digital booths, and the Water Europe Annual General Meeting.



Which were the key messages of our annual conference?

- Technological innovation is critical, if yet a means to an end. Social and financial innovation are also needed. We need new talent, new skills in the water sector, including a more integrated approach to policy design and implementation.
- It's been hundreds of years that we have been taking water for granted. Now we have an abundance of technologies, so what we also need is to share the best available knowledge. With training and education, we can reach much further from what we think it's possible.
- The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated how vulnerable our food security is and has emphasized the need to make it resilient, considering the international dimension, the length of supply chains and cross-sectoral implications of single-sector actions.
- We need three revolutions: a revolution in understanding, in planning (designing) and in financing. The EU Green Deal is a great opportunity that enables Europe to lead by example the fair and green transition we need.
- We need to encourage industries to use new technologies and circular processes. Assessment tools are also needed to evaluate the risks and reduce uncertainty caused by climate change.

WE
Communicate

We are reaching 30.000 individuals through our communications every month. To inform them. To engage them.

We are interacting with more than 12.000 social media users every day



Twitter
+813 Followers

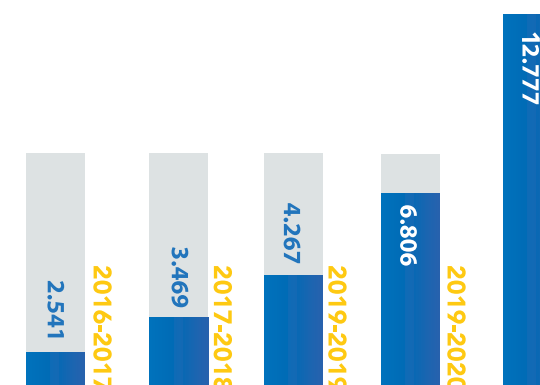
LinkedIn
+3.923 Followers



Youtube
+19 new videos +8 Live Streamings



Instagram
Launched



87.7% increase of our social media influence

Interviews of the year



Svenja Schulze
German Federal Minister
for the Environment



João Pedro Matos Fernandes
Portuguese Minister of
Environment



Pernille Weiss
MEP Water Group
Chairman & EPP member



Christopher Gasson
GWI Owner



Hasmik Barseghyan
President EUPW



Alexander Vandersmissen
Mayor of Mechelen



Florika Fink-Hooier
Director General
for the Environment, EC

With two newsletters every month, Water Europe informs 18.000 individuals from all over Europe and the world.

This year, we published:

- **8** newsletters to the whole water community
- **11** newsletters to our Water Europe members



**24 Projects
since 2014**



Involved in 24 EU funded projects

Served more than 50 members in 6 years

Water Europe facilitates its members' involvement into EU research projects, and supports their outreach activities, providing communication, dissemination, policy and networking services to projects that are in line with Water Europe Vision and SIRA and have at least one Water Europe member in their consortium. Since 2014, Water Europe has participated in 24 projects, serving more than 50 members.

Water Europe services for project involvement



Communication and dissemination



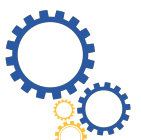
Networking



Living Labs



Policy



Clustering

4 New projects starting in 2021



Nexogenesis ARSINOE

New Projects Kicked off in the second half of 2020



Ongoing Projects



Completed Projects



Who WE are

Our Vision

Water Europe envisions a Water-Smart Society, in which the true Value of Water is recognised and realised, and all available water sources are managed in such a way that water scarcity and pollution of groundwater are avoided. Water and resource loops are largely closed to foster a circular economy and optimal resource efficiency, while the water system is resilient against the impact of climate change events.

Our Mission

- Improve coordination and collaboration in the water sector and water using sectors.
- Enhance the performance and competitiveness of the European water and water using sectors in the EU and beyond.
- Contribute to solving global challenges through research and innovation.

Our Values define us

Water Europe strives to generate impactful results for its members, and it does so with commitment towards building a Water-Smart Society. Our values and our vision for the future are clear. All our actions are guided by this one main compass, our Water Vision 2030. Our vision means societal responsibility. It means forward-looking innovation. It means evidence based and financially sustainable solutions. This is the way we deliver results, together with our members, covering the whole water value chain. This is how we have made it possible to deliver the right results, the right way.



Thank you
for your
commitment

WE Board



Tomas A. Michel
WE President



Hans Goossens
First VP
De Watergroep



Wim van Vierssen
VP Innovation
Aveco de Bondt



Marie-Renée de Roubin
VP Finances
Veolia Environment



David Martin
VP Advocacy
Nalco



Chrysi Laspidou
VP RTD
University of Thessaly



Mark Lange
Board Member
Microsoft



Xavier Litrico
Board Member
Suez



Alexis de Kerchove
Board Member
Xylem



Peter Trillingsgaard
Board Member
Grundfos



Jorge J. Malfeito-Sánchez
Board Member
Acciona Agua



Richard Elelman
Board Member
Eurecat



Marielle van der Zouwen
Board Member
KWR



Cláudio de Jesus
Board Member
Águas de Portugal



Ilari Aho
Board Member
Uponor



Josep Molas
Board Member
Coca Cola



Charlotte Boeckeaert
Board Member
Vlakwa

WE Policy Advisory Committee



Sophie Vermooten
Policy advisory committee
Deltares



Anders Andtbacka
Policy advisory committee
Uponor



Dirk Halet
Policy advisory committee
Vlakwa



Denis Bonvillain
Policy advisory committee
Suez



Ana Jiménez
Policy advisory committee
Acciona Agua



Nuno Brôco
Policy advisory committee
Águas de Portugal



Alexis de Kerchove
Policy advisory committee
Xylem



Jonas Fredsted Villadsen
Policy advisory committee
Grundfos



Kathleen De Schepper
Policy advisory committee
De Watergroep



Romane Malysza
Policy advisory committee
Microsoft



Horst Heitz
Policy advisory committee
SME connect



Isabel De Castro
Policy advisory committee
Intel



Dominique Gatel
Policy advisory committee
Veolia

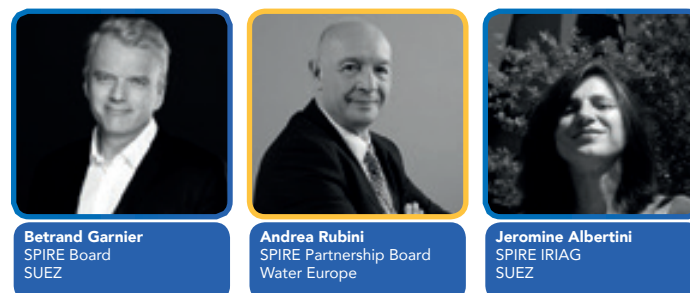


Phoebe Koundouri
Policy advisory committee
Athens University of
Economics and Business

WE Vision Leadership Teams



SPIRE Representatives



WE Working Groups



WE Members

College A



College B



College B



College C



College D



College D



College E



College F



College G



Thank you



www.watereurope.eu

 @H2OEU

 Water Europe Company

 Water Europe Group

 Water Europe

 Water Europe

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