

Commissioner Dubravka Šuica  
Vice-President  
European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels – Belgium

Brussels, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## **Subject: Main priorities for water under the Commission 2019-2024**

Dear Commissioner,

For nine consecutive years, the World Economic Forum has ranked water crises as a top global societal risk in terms of impact on every aspect of our lives. The post COVID19 situation in Europe is a wake-up call to switch to a new paradigm in which consideration for water security and risk management are prerequisites.

The EU Water Alliance, composed of a broad range of water-related stakeholders, has therefore addressed key messages to Von der Leyen's Commission (see annex 1). As you are entrusted with the role of Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, water challenges have a direct impact on your mission to coordinate the long-term vision for rural areas, the participation of citizens and actions regarding the youth of Europe.

**Therefore, this large coalition of water-related stakeholders kindly requests a meeting with you to discuss the following points of interest related to your portfolio and which would result in positive impacts both in Europe and beyond:**

- Promoting and ensuring inclusive, multi-stakeholder water governance throughout Europe, in line with the *inter alia* principles of the Water Framework Directive, facilitating and allowing the meaningful participation of all water stakeholders, especially citizens, civil society organisations including youth and women representative groups in all their diversity, both in the monitoring of water and sanitation services in the broadest sense and in policy making. Citizens science could play an excellent supporting role here. The rural Water oriented Living Labs (WoLLs) provide an opportunity to maximise the efforts of your directorate to increase citizen participation in the water sector.
- Investing in innovative water supply solutions in order to provide safe drinking water and sanitation to (isolated) rural areas and thus reduce the social divide between urban and rural areas as well as prevention of the desertification of these areas.
- Fit-for-purpose financing also directly benefitting the local groups and appropriate, affordable and manageable technology combined with vocational training for women and youth to give access to water-related jobs could signify an important difference.
- Support the innovative potential of young water leaders to commit themselves to their communities and propose innovative solutions in the field of water and sanitation by providing them with the necessary tools (training, mentoring, grants) to boost their

employability and career development. To ensure the achievement of the SDGs and especially SDG6, new human resources are urgently required. Improved support for young professionals at the local level will also reduce the risk of *brain drain*. As in all cases we would recommend fully inclusive approaches that involve all stakeholders and lead to the joint ownership of the solutions. Creating improved mechanisms for discussions with the relevant groups and local government agencies involved in order to design more efficient engagement procedures would be highly recommendable.

We are determined to form a proactive part of the solution.

Therefore, we look forward to scheduling a meeting to discuss these issues at your earliest convenience. The contact point for further communication is Durk Krol, Water Europe Executive director, [durk.krol@watereurope.eu](mailto:durk.krol@watereurope.eu), tel: +32 2 7068292

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Water Europe Director  
Durk Krol



On behalf of:



Enclosed:

- Annex 1: EUWA Manifesto