

Commissioner Elisa Ferreira  
Cohesion and Reforms  
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 Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, water-related challenges directly impact on your mission to ensure that Europe invests and supports the regions and the people ensuring that no-one is forgotten within the process of digitalisation and climate transition in Europe.

**Therefore, this large coalition of water-related stakeholders kindly requests a meeting with you to discuss a number of challenges and opportunities. Water is a key element within your portfolio that will have an important impact on European society and beyond:**

- The Green Deal is an opportunity to underline the importance of water-related challenges. Investments is necessary in order to ensure a smooth and effective transition that includes all social groups. Convergence, climate change and digitalisation of Europe cannot be achieved without investment employing transition funds justly allocated, in line with European priorities such as the Green Deal and the UN SDGs. Emerging and diffuse pollution impacts not only our rural areas and food systems but also cities, especially if one takes into account extreme events and the low quality of WASH services. The digitalisation of water provides information which is key to the maintaining of Europe as a frontrunner when addressing diffuse pollution in urban areas. The zero-pollution strategy through the controlling of pollution at source is therefore an extremely welcome measure.
- To overcome the risk of climate transition, with an effective circular economy for the EU regions, the European Commission should consider initiating and engaging in a truly meaningful dialogue with citizens regarding water, sanitation and hygiene services and the restoration of biodiversity priorities. This objective requires the raising of awareness and a dialogue with people on the ground. At present, the EU climate pact

# EU Water Alliance

has omitted to include water-related challenges with the inherent risk that this entails. The non-inclusion of a key resource for society and the unfamiliarity with the related issues on the part of an important proportion of society, as a whole, constitutes an important obstacle to the achievement of an effective transition to a digitalised and sustainable Europe.

- The creation of Water oriented Living Labs (WoLLs) to promote a Water Smart Society, in which the true value of water is both recognised and acted upon, and where by applying both technological and non-technological innovations, all available water sources are managed in such a way that water scarcity and pollution of groundwater are avoided, constitute a powerful tool to increase the impact of the directorate's actions in supporting regions and authorities and engaging with citizens in order to determine the correct manner to provide both investment and non-financial support.

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