

Commissioner Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels – Belgium

Brussels, 9th 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 Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, water challenges have a direct impact on your mission to tackle climate change in each EU policy and reduce the EU's vulnerability to climate change.

Therefore, this large coalition of water-related stakeholders kindly requests a meeting with you to discuss the following points of interests related to your portfolio which intends to implement the Green Deal and have a positive impact on society in Europe and beyond:

- The opportunity of the Green Deal to make water-related challenges truly visible and to dismantle the silo-approach by establishing a clear picture of the connections between water and health, education, economic development, innovation, security, digitalisation, gender equality, agriculture and oceans. The European Semester process and all EU funding programmes could fulfil fundamental roles in the addressing of these challenges, whilst demonstrating how water can contribute to the reduction of pollution emissions. Campaigns such as *ClimateIsWater* would assist in this task.
- The need for an inclusive and systemic approach with regards to all relevant EU policies in order to reinforce the resilience of our ecosystems and society, particularly through the conservation of peatlands or the development of Nature-Based Solutions to address climate and water challenges and to reduce vulnerability.
- The need for inclusive governance with the full value chain, including NGOs, CSOs, local authorities, businesses, water users, citizens with specific emphasise on the

involvement of youth and women encompassing the full diversity of the aforementioned sectors in order to integrate water as a central issue with the creation and implementation of initiatives designed to achieve the carbon-neutral objective of the Green Deal.

- Reinforce the role of Europe at international climate negotiations by including and promoting the relevance of water and sanitation as described in UN SDG 6 (including WASH services and the restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity in order to achieve other SDGs).
- Education regarding water and vocational training designed to address the major current challenges would support the creation of green employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership, particularly in the case of youths and women. In addition, intra-generational dialogues between decision-makers/experts and young leaders, would contribute to the fostering of experience and knowledge exchange and the consideration of priorities as discerned from the perspective of the younger generations.
- Enhance the dialogue already established with organisations such as SDGWatch and ensure that organisations representing the water and sanitation sectors form part of said dialogue. Discuss how available funding can be made more *fit-for-purpose* and diminish present bureaucratic criteria so that more entities feel themselves capable of applying for and receiving support within frameworks such as LIFE+.
- Discuss how cross-issue and cross-sector mechanisms can be created so that all stakeholders may be involved and their roles in the relevant preparatory and implementation stages of initiatives enhanced even if, to date, they do not feature in the Transparency Register.

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, 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



EU Water Alliance

On behalf of:



Enclosed:

- Annex 1: EUWA Manifesto