

Commissioner Helena Dalli
Equality
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 Commissioner for Equality, the water-related challenges directly impact on your mission to strengthen inclusion and equality in Europe and beyond.

Therefore, this broad coalition of water-related stakeholders kindly requests a meeting with you to discuss a number of challenges and opportunities. Water is a key element for your portfolio that has a specific impact on society in Europe and beyond:

- Water-related risks constitute the principal challenges of the coming decade. In Europe, the consequences of climate change are becoming more visible every year, encapsulating severe implications for the lives of the most vulnerable citizens (children and older people). In order to assume the leading role in sustainable development, we believe that the European Commission will have to establish water, sanitation and hygiene services and the restoration of biodiversity as priorities within the EU international agenda, supporting investment and raising the importance of water in order to achieve the UN SDGs. The WASH sector shows huge potential as a contributor to prosperity, given that two thirds of world employment is dependent on water.¹WASH is also a key determining factor in the pursuit of overall sustainable human development.
- Furthermore, access to WASH has a transformative effect, especially with regards to the lives of women and girls. Women and girls face the risk of abuse and sexual assault

¹ 2016 UN World Water Development Report, Water and Jobs, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/wwap/wwdr/2016-water-and-jobs/>

EU Water Alliance

when fetching water. In the case of women with disabilities or elderly women, inadequate access to water is an equally important obstacle. The elimination of the burden of fetching water contributes to the safety and dignity of women whilst permitting them to engage in societal activities such as education and work, thus ostensibly improving their lives by increased social empowerment.

- Investment in a Water Smart Society further ensures that EU development programmes aimed at supporting vocational training in the water sector are also accessible and targeted to women so that they may be better represented in professions such as plumbing or hydrology.

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



On behalf of:



Enclosed:

- Annex 1: EUWA Manifesto