

Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski  
Agriculture  
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 (annex 1). As you are entrusted with the role of Commissioner for Agriculture, water challenges have a direct impact on your mission to ensure a modern and sustainable EU agricultural sector that adapts to climate changes.

Agricultural production both contributes to climate change and is affected by climate change. Water pollution from agriculture and extreme climate events such as floods and droughts affect both water and food production security and constitute the main threats for future agricultural activity.

Moreover, the strong connections with the other plans and strategies of the EU demonstrates the importance of considering water as a common denominator in order to ensure that the Green Deal is successful and capable of addressing global water scarcity and crisis. **Therefore, this large coalition of water-related stakeholders kindly requests a meeting with you to discuss the *Farm to fork* strategy within the context of the following points of interest:**

- The reduction of water pollution along the entire production, processing and consumption chain. The increase of pollution presents a key challenge, as it poses possible risks to our food safety and health.
- The rationalisation and reduction of freshwater consumption, particularly by boosting water recycling/reuse/cascading/symbiosis, the promoting of the digitalisation of water and synergies between rural, urban and industrial areas, especially when addressing the issue of water scarcity. Water efficiency contributes to water security by reducing dependence on the water source.
- The protection of freshwater ecosystems such as peatlands against drainage. The restoration of peatlands contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

through adapted drainage systems and the development of Nature-Based Solutions such as permaculture and wet farming on organic peat soils.

- In compliance with the Water Framework Directive, it is important to encourage an inclusive dialogue with stakeholders from outside the agricultural sector, to adapt and improve water governance, infrastructures and systems to climate change and to create a systemic management and decision-making process for resilience.
- Water-oriented Living Labs could be an effective instrument for the achievement of a Water Smart Society.

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