

Commissioner Kadri Simson
Energy
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 Energy, water-related challenges directly impact your mission to provide safe, secure and sustainable energy for Europe, empowering people and regions alike. **Therefore, this large coalition of water-related stakeholders kindly requests a meeting with you to discuss the following points of interest:**

- The importance of the water-energy nexus. Water and energy efficiency go hand in hand: Both an energy efficient or energy-producing water sector and conversely, water efficiency within the energy sector will support environmental objectives. The Green Deal is an opportunity to mitigate GHGs and to reduce the use of water by fully exploiting the water-energy nexus (extracting energy from water fluxes, exploiting energy gradients in water and reducing energy-intensive water needs such as heating and cooling).
- The challenge of small and large-scale hydropower as a potential source of renewable energy production but with major environmental impacts on river basins, and the risk for fishery, agriculture and transport. This risk is high especially when one contemplates the issue of aging infrastructures. Aspects to consider also include the contribution to global warming through the discharge of greenhouse gases by hydroelectric dams and the likelihood of climate change inducing longer droughts and more intense floods which can increase challenges for other water users. The tools to ensure that hydropower is more sustainable are available but remain to a large extent, unknown and are seldom employed.
- The need to better exploit the value in water by extracting and valorising energy embedded in used water streams. This opportunity offers a new source of energy in line with the zero-pollution strategy and increases the flexibility for the sector to provide

EU Water Alliance

safe, secure and sustainable energy at a local level, empowering people within the implementation process by means of the Living Labs approach.

- The creation of Water oriented Living Labs (WoLLs) to test new solutions and increase synergies between the water and energy sectors in order to increase the development of clean energy and a more reliable energy supply whilst securing and implementing energy-efficiency and renewable-energy measures. The Just Transition Fund can support industrial and energy intensive regional initiatives to create a Water Smart Society which will further lead to the enhancement of the water-energy nexus and the subsequent establishment of an Energy Smart society.
- At all levels of intervention, it is the opinion of the consortium that fully inclusive approaches involving all stakeholders and the establishment of true joint ownership of the solutions by the collective exploration of alternatives, benefits and risks is fundamental.

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