

Brussels, 22 March 2022

Open letter on the International Water Day to call for a Water-Smart Europe

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

On the World Water Day, I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the importance of water for our society and economy, and the special focus of this year's edition of World Water Day on groundwater.

According to the EEA, groundwater abstraction has increased significantly in the last 30 to 40 years due to new agricultural and socio-economic developments in areas where surface water resources are insufficient, in poor condition or simply far too expensive. Until now we have been able to rely on groundwater, but the often invisible deterioration of the groundwater quality, through salinization or pollution, has become already a major problem in many European countries.

Moreover, groundwater is key to a resilient and sustainable future and needs to be used and protected in an integral way. It plays a role in the energy transition through development of ATES (Aquifer Thermal Energy Storage) and geothermal energy, in the transition to a sustainable agriculture and in the protection and resilience of nature areas.

Now, you must step in. As stressed by the latest IPCC report, it is your responsibility as a member of the European Parliament to protect water resources, we are all depending on.

As the recognised voice and promotor of water-related innovation and RTD in Europe, Water Europe (WE) is a value-based multi-stakeholder association with over 250 members representing the whole diversity of the innovative water eco-system. WE has been initiated by the European Commission as a European Technology Platform, and all its members share a common vision for building a Water-Smart Society.

A Water-Smart Society means a society in which the true value of water is recognised and realised, all available water sources are managed in such a way that water scarcity and pollution of water resources are avoided, water and resource loops are largely closed to foster a circular economy and optimal resource efficiency, the water system is resilient against the impact of climate change events, and all relevant stakeholders are involved in the governance of our water system.

As member of this assembly, you can embrace your societal responsibility and build a Water-Smart Europe where all available water sources are managed in such a way that we achieve a

resilient and autonomous Europe. Three important directives are now under revision and can be the starting point of this common objective for citizens:

- **the Industrial Emissions Directive** which can strongly contribute to water and energy efficiency in our industry to foster European strategy autonomy.
- **the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive** to unlock the potential of circular economy in urban areas.
- **the Energy Efficiency Directive** to unleash the potential of the water-energy nexus and increase water and energy efficiency.

We remain at your disposal to exchange on the achievement of a Water-Smart Society.

Yours sincerely,



Durk Krol
Executive Director
Water Europe