

EU Water Alliance

Statement on the hearing of the new Commissioners by Water Alliance

The EU Water Alliance is an informal coalition of more than 500 organisations across the entire value chain representing the wide range of water stakeholders¹.

The Water Alliance developed these key messages for the new Commissioners highlighting the importance of water to the European economy, environment and society.

- The sustainable management of Europe's water resources is essential to ensure a resilient Energy Union and a forward looking Climate Change policy. The actual importance of water is often diluted out by the fact that water shows up in so many different sectors of society. It is only when one starts looking at the support from the water sector to all other sectors of the economy that one starts realizing its quintessential position for jobs, growth and investment.
- Europe has one of the longest track records in water management in the World and is still a global industrial leader in terms of service provision and technology development. This history has also led to Europe having a wide spectrum of leading expertise in the various aspects of water resource management. Hundreds of European Institutions, public and private water service providers, SMEs, engineering and consulting companies have developed and continue to develop highly technical concepts to address water problems in the EU and around the globe.
- With the Water Framework Directive, the Floods Directive and related policies, the EU has one of the most ambitious and challenging pieces of water legislation in the world, thus providing a unique regulatory driver for innovation in the water-dependent economy, offering us a competitive advantages comparing to other regions.

The EU Water Alliance highlights the following key issues for the water sector in Europe:

1. **The overriding importance of the water sector for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth has to be reflected as a vital and cross-cutting theme in systemic research and innovation policies and financing instruments. Water needs to be integrated within other EU policies through water-energy-food-land-resources nexuses.**
2. **The European Innovation Partnership on Water as a strategic driver for systemic changes in European water sector has to be reinforced, and adequately resourced. Closer collaboration between all Innovation Partnerships has to be fortified.**
3. **The EU water policy should be based on resource efficiency and recovery, pollution source control via full implementation of a *polluter-pays principle*, and the promotion of sustainable water management as a driver for a circular and green economy stimulating industrial symbiosis.**
4. **The principle of cost recovery and price transparency needs to be ensured and the value of water in all its dimensions needs to be recognised.**
5. **Regulation and voluntary incentives on water stewardship should go hand in hand. EU policies need to ensure that water is taken into account along the whole value chain across the production/product/service cycle.**

¹ research, innovation in water, water sector itself (utilities and European federations and national associations), big water users: industry and agriculture as well as SMEs and decision-makers

