

Statement on the hearing of the Commissioner-designate responsible for DG ENVIRONMENT

- 1. The Commissioner for the Environment should commit him/herself to the full implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), EU Floods Directive (FD) and, in particular, to ensuring the principle of cost recovery and transparency of water pricing.**

The health of our ecosystems, the source of water, needs to be maintained and enhanced and the basic human right to water and sanitation, confirmed by the UN Sustainable Development Goal on Water, should be a reality today and for generations to come. To this end, water services should be affordable and, at the same time, the level of tariffs should be appropriate. Transparency is urgently needed as to who is using and polluting water and who is paying for it. In order to ensure the necessary long term investments to maintain and renew infrastructures, the WFD principle of cost recovery should be fully implemented.

- 2. The Commissioner for the Environment should be committed to an environmental policy based on controlling pollution at source.**

New micro pollutants are emerging and pose serious risks to human health and environment. At the same time, pollution of water resources originating from agriculture (nitrates, pesticides) and industry (heavy metals, chemical substances, etc.) needs to be tackled and the European Commission needs to remain strong in enforcing the Community legislation. In addition, a source control approach must be adopted in order to prevent hazardous substances microplastics, nanoparticles and micro-pollutants from entering the water cycle as the most cost-effective solution. The WFD *polluter pays principle* must be correctly applied and should be based on inclusive multi-stakeholder governance.

- 3. The Commissioner for the Environment should promote sustainable water management as a driver for a resource-efficient and circular economy.**

Water is essential but limited resources and needs are to be carefully allocated and used. Furthermore, waste water contains elements that could be recovered in a circular economy: energy, phosphorus, other nutrients, etc.

- 4. The Commissioner for the Environment should take an active role in steering the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Water and ensure a coordinated approach with EIP on agriculture and smart cities.**

The EIPs in general, and EIP Water in particular, have proven to be useful tools (a) to facilitate the development and stimulate the uptake of innovative solutions, (b) to guide actions in removing barriers to innovation, (c) to address social challenges, to facilitate industrial leadership in water, and (d) to contribute in raising competitiveness and economic growth. More resources for the implementation of the EIP Water should be foreseen within the European Commission as well as for the implementation of the EU water policy and water sector to ensure a leading strategic role for smart and innovative changes of the European water sector and water-dependent industries.

