

Statement on the hearing of the Commissioner- designate for DG INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP and SMEs

A sustainable management of Europe's water resources is one of the foundations for the Industrial Renaissance of Europe. Water plays a quintessential part in supporting a large number of industrial activities that are heavily reliant on a constant supply of sufficient water of the right quality, and a large manufacturing and water services sector is a crucial economic and social driver in Europe with more than 136.000 SME's directly involved in the value chains of the water-related economy.

1. The new Commissioner should encourage the combining of approaches for innovative solutions in water in order to strengthen industrial competitiveness by:

- Greening the industry, strengthening actions on source control measures, going to the roots of the value chain of the production and pollution generation processes. Treating water as a scarce natural resource, and greening the industrial production cycles with the purpose of preventing pollutants entering industrial or domestic water cycles with the emphasis on the detection of emerging micro, nano and other emerging pollutants (e.g. pharmaceutical compounds), micro plastics, etc.
- Using the 'end-of-pipe' approach (when water pollution is unavoidable); finding and implementing the systemic, innovative and advanced technological and non-technological innovations for a used-water treatment to obtain adequate water quality for different purposes of its re-use. Going from removing of compounds on the way to recovering of resources, requires the redesigning of current technologies (towards optimal product recovery) and the development of dedicated technological concepts (towards higher market readiness levels).

2. The new Commissioner should commit to contribute to the integrated water management for a sustainable EU industry by:

- Stimulating industrial symbiosis via water reuse and recycling; removing barriers to innovations in industrial water cycles, including water components in the industrial value chains. Stimulating the recovery of critical materials and innovations in the water-energy nexus.
- Ensuring that the EU's investment in R&D&I is converted into business benefits in the water sector. New business models for sustainability and resource efficiency involving SMEs, moving wastewater up the value chain.
- Boosting industrial green growth and a circular economy by decoupling an increase in industrial production from the pollution of Europe's water resources.
- Creating market opportunities, international valorisation for innovations in water and supplemental economic value for recovery of water.
- Strengthening the links between the H2020 programme and the DG Enterprise competitiveness programmes in order to extract value from the large R&D&I investments.

Europe will grow by being innovative and competitive. Value from R&D&I investments is only obtained when results are successfully applied.

