

## Statement on the hearing of the Commissioner-designate responsible for DG CLIMATE ACTION

- 1. The new Commissioner should work for a more climate-resilient Europe that takes more into account water considerations within climate change mitigation efforts at EU level and climate adaptation strategies at national level.**

Observation records and climate projections provide abundant evidence that freshwater resources are vulnerable and have the potential to be strongly impacted by climate change, with wide-ranging consequences on human societies and ecosystems. There are two major water management challenges for Europe: increasing water stress and related droughts, mainly in South-Eastern Europe, and increasing flood risk across the whole European continent. The impact on the quantity - and consequently on the quality - of water resources will affect not only water services, but also other sectors such as agriculture, industry, energy, biodiversity, tourism, etc.

The scale of the challenge requires a change in the climate mitigation efforts and climate adaptation strategies, including improved data collection and access to the data, research into critical uncertainties, better integration between sectors and an increased solidarity between Member States.

Actions for a more climate-resilient Europe should be strengthened, since sustainable water management is actually the main component of the climate change adaptation strategy. The river basin management planning and national adaptation strategies shall complement each other. Water resilience, risk prevention and risk management should be considered priorities of the European climate action policy.

- 2. The new Commissioner should ensure integration of water into other policies in the context of adaptation to climate change**

Climate mitigation and climate adaptation considerations should be better integrated within the smart cities strategy in order to bring together fragmented initiatives and increase the economic viability and the environmental sustainability of innovative solutions. Actions should be taken promoting adaptation activities related to municipal water sensitivity in accordance with the Covenant of Mayors initiative, developing smart cities and communities as water is a key component for cities. Climate adaptation policy should also encourage more initiatives which address water issues in key priority areas such as agriculture, energy, urban development, resilience to extreme water events (in order to ensure the functioning of economies dependent on water, resilience of critical water infrastructures), and ensuring domestic water services in changing climate situations.

