

Statement on the hearing of the Commissioner-designate for DG DIGITAL ECONOMY and SOCIETY

Competing demands for scarce water resources may lead to an estimated 40 % supply shortage by 2030 according to the Water Resources Group. Recently, the World Economic Forum identified the water supply crisis as one of the top five global risks during the 21st Century.

1. The new Commissioner should guarantee that water remains a priority of the EU ICT policy

Digital technologies in water can contribute to the resource efficiency. Therefore the priority for action to launch new research and innovation initiatives on developing and deploying advanced ICT solutions in the water sector would fully exploit the role of ICT in (a) the protection and sustainable management of water resources and ecosystems; (b) ensuring the security and quality of water distribution networks, and (c) optimising the use of resources and energy in water treatment process. ICT would also foster interoperability between water information systems at EU and national/regional levels and the efficiency of a real-time water resources management system in agricultural, urban areas, water supply and sanitation systems, and smart systems for early warning in forecasting and management of extreme events.

2. The Commissioner should integrate water into the Strategic Implementation Plan of the EIP Smart Cities and Communities

Smart City applications can help provide local, national and international solutions to global issues only when cities develop a long-term integrated strategy and implementation plan on transport, energy, ICT, solid waste, climate adaptation, and water supply and waste water treatment. Water management shall be one of the major parts of Smart City strategy.

3. The Commissioner should ensure a continuous dialogue with other relevant DGs, and shall prioritise support to water sector as a principal player in the transition to a Green Growth Economy as recognised by OECD.

ICT support to smart and integrated management of water resources, water supply and demand in water services, and water management in water-using industries (such as energy production, textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food, leather/tanneries) will make an important contribution to economic development, smart and green job creation, and increase the innovation component in the water sector.

