

## *Honorable Members of the European Parliament!*

On behalf of the **European Pact for Water**<sup>1</sup>, a network of 30+ organizations based in Europe working on water-related issues, we would like to draw your attention urgently to the following.

As you are no doubt aware, water is the crucial, cross-cutting element when it comes to most of the SDGs; in addition, the impact of climate change is for 80%+ felt through water-related events and an increasing driver of migration.

We are fully aware that the European Parliament is currently discussing the new Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021-2027 proposals.

**Our first concern** is the fact that “water” is not explicitly mentioned as a “budget-line”, although the agreed European Consensus on Development and the Council conclusions on Water diplomacy (under preparation - expected December 2018) would require that. “Water” as key element to be considered in every social and economic development action, wants and needs to be everywhere, can and will be supporting all SDGs as a cross-cutting issue, but does not want to be mainstreamed only in policies (*if you are mainstreamed everywhere, you are no-where*).

**Our second major concern** is the fact that the budget for “Global Challenges”<sup>2</sup> is almost halved in the current proposals and thus leading to less opportunity for DG DEVCO to address the global Water-challenge(s).

Yes, funding for local projects on the ground is extremely important, but it’s not the whole story.

Issues like awareness raising, cross-continent stakeholder involvement and water operator partnerships, reuse of water (incl. wastewater treatment, waste export), and virtual water amongst others need a more encompassing, process-oriented approach that cannot be decentralized to EU missions across the globe.

**Our third concern:** 2/3 of the jobs in the world are depending on “water”, especially in developing countries (WWDR2016). This works out in multiple ways:

- a shortage of educated professionals to implement all water-related targets of the SDGs (amounting to at least 1 million people/ jobs in Europe and West Africa alone) and thus the need of substantially enhance support for vocational training in this fields.
- Or to put it positively: “water” will create hundreds of thousands of jobs per region (thus answering to the Lisbon strategy) and assist with creating a more green, circular economy.
- current (involuntary and voluntary) displacement and migration flows lead to un-planned/ un-expected higher needs for safe drinking water and sanitation in the hosting countries, and sometimes go beyond existing infrastructure and local resources for them to address this and thus to negative effects in communities and camps amongst others in terms of health/ hygiene etc. Investment in “water” can lower the burden and negative impacts locally and regionally and lead to better living conditions overall.

**Our fourth concern** is that we need to enable and strengthen water diplomacy and transboundary cooperation more and consistently.

**Our fifth concern** is that despite an overall welcome increase for EU's external action to € 123bn, with € 89.2bn dedicated to the NDICI, climate and, thus possible water relevant expenditure is set to account for only a modest 25% of the overall budget of the instrument without sufficiently integrating the environmental dimension.

#### **WE URGENTLY INVITE YOU TO:**

- Ensure that the Global Challenges budget is NOT cut but that its share in the total budget remains untouched or even increased to ensure water-related global issues are supported; we indicate that at least €1.2 bn earmarked funding for development and water-related activities (can be) facilitated by DG DECVO.
- Dedicate a substantial amount to vocational training and hence creating jobs in the water-sector – being convinced that this type of investment will lower involuntary migration.
- Ensure 45 % of the budget of NDICI is dedicated/ or connected to climate change and environment/water related projects combined to promote actions that can deliver multiple benefits across a range of sectors.

**Reactions and responses:** [EuropeanPactforWater@borda.org](mailto:EuropeanPactforWater@borda.org) and [wima@witmer.info](mailto:wima@witmer.info)

**Signed by / on behalf of:** BORDA, Women for Water Partnership, Oxfam GB, ONGAWA, Wetlands International European Association, SIMAVI, PROTOS, Coalition Eau

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<sup>1</sup> The **European Pact for Water** was established in January 2016 as an informal coordination and advocacy network across the wider-Europe on water governance. Its aim is to disseminate information, build capacity, exchange on and pool collective efforts and knowledge in order to highlight the importance of water and sanitation to attain the goals set out in fundamental international and European agendas specifically on water-related issues.

Its participants are Europe-based non-state actors, specifically NGOs and CSOs. The network currently connects directly 35+ organizations and its members across the (European part of the) UNECE region. The network exchanges with and also receives input from and liaises with organizations like Aquafed, OECD, SIWI, European Commission (DEVCO, Environment and EEAS), WWC, Member States of the EU.

Through its participants it connects with platforms and initiatives like SDGWatch, End Water Poverty, #ClimateIsWater, Butterfly Effect NGO coalition - avoiding duplication but making use of their expertise and connections.

The network contributes inter alia actively to the European Consensus on development, the process on the SDGs in Europe, the debate on the intergovernmental architecture for water in the UN and in Europe and initiatives around monitoring of the SDGs (water specific).

Its vision is to create “Aquawareness” (in Europe) to achieve sustainable water resource management and universal access to safe water supply and sanitation valuing water in all its dimensions – in its economic, social, environmental and cultural importance.

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<sup>2</sup> Under Heading VI: Neighbourhood and the world / Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDIC) / Thematic Programmes: Global Challenges [MFF 2014-2020=€5.7bn; MFF 2017-2027=€3bn; -48%]