

Ursula von der Leyen, President
Maroš Šefčovič, Vice President
Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner

Brussels, 12th March 2024

Subject: Call on the European Commission to deliver the Water Resilience Initiative to pave the way for an ambitious water strategy

Honourable President,
Honourable Vice President,
Honourable Commissioner,

There is no resilience in Europe without a water-resilient Europe.

We, a broad coalition of European organisations, call on the European Commission to deliver the Water Resilience Initiative as soon as possible as a first step towards an ambitious water strategy for Europe.

Europe's freshwater resources are under increasing pressure, intensified by climate change effects putting society, ecosystems, and economic development at risk¹.

Water is a critical resource to ensure economic, societal, and environmental sustainability of Europe. The Water Resilience Initiative would provide a framework that reduces the risks of competition over this strategic resource among European socio-economic actors thus securing enough water of the right quality at the right time. In addition, water efficiency is a key asset for European competitiveness and strategic autonomy. Even if the steps are gradual, they need to be steady and consistent to unlock the potential and establish an environment that enables water resilience, sustainability, and security. During the last five years, the European institutions have proactively updated the European water acquis to align with the new challenges that we are facing.

A broad consensus between the different European Member States and institutions has emerged to highlight the need of a coherent and comprehensive water strategy. The European Council in two resolutions in [2021](#) and [2023](#) highlighted the “*strategic importance of water and the need to act*”. The European Council also voted on comprehensive and bold water commitments and submitted them to the UN 2023 Water Conference.

This strategy cannot be delivered without the Water Resilience Initiative that was announced in the State of the Union speech in September 2023. We are concerned about the Commission’s decision to put on hold this priority communication.

¹ According to your administration, over 14,000 areas in the EU are at significant risk of flooding while 19.6% of the EU-27 territory is in warning condition for drought in the first half of February 2024.

Now, it's time to leverage and coordinate synergies with all the social and economic sectors.

As Europe proposes to be the frontrunner, we call on the European Commission to urgently deliver the Water Resilience Initiative, as committed, and make water a top priority for the next mandate of the European Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories

