



EurEau feedback to the roadmap on the EU Methane Strategy

Cutting emissions to combat climate change

EurEau is the European federation of water services and represents nearly all the waste water operators in Europe. We welcome the EU Methane Strategy initiative, which intends to reduce the manmade methane emissions by putting in place an enabling environment to cut these emissions, which contribute to climate change.

The primary responsibility of our members is waste water treatment, which includes treatment of sewage sludge; these processes emit some methane.

Our members actively produce biogas from sewage sludge under controlled conditions to stabilise the sludge, reduce the amount of sludge produced and to produce renewable energy. This methane is collected and reused for energy production at the waste water treatment plant or for municipal use if allowed. Although a small emitter relative to other sectors, some facilities may emit methane to the atmosphere from different process steps and we acknowledge the fact that the roadmap highlights that “further mitigation potential in sectors such as waste water treatment and sewage sludge treatment and use should be explored”. As the waste water sector, we support the process of identifying and quantifying the emissions of methane from waste water and sludge treatment and use. We support a sustainable waste water sector that can take measures to mitigate its impact on the environment, including greenhouse gas emissions. Horizon Europe should be one of the instruments to address the quantitative inventory of Green House Gas emissions of the water sector to map where the effort can be the most cost-effective.

We note that the roadmap mentioned the opportunity for farmers to diversify their income through biogas production. The Farm2Fork strategy mentions that “Farms also have the potential to produce biogas from other sources of waste and residue including sewage and waste water”. We insist that measures should lead to sustainable solutions, respecting the investments already made by the water sector in order to minimise the production of sludge and maximise the production of biogas. The future enabling environment, to cut emissions of methane, should allow cross-sector working to maximise the value of existing assets. Furthermore, the digestion process releases liquid matter (liquors) from the digested biomass, either from waste water or from manure that need treatment. Waste water treatment plants can treat this effluent in the biological treatment phase, which is not possible for assets that only digest biomass.



We note that the roadmap identifies monitoring and data collection for methane is needed to support future legislative action in this field. We accept that data concerning methane in the waste water treatment, sludge treatment and sludge use is currently not available, however we ask about covering the associated costs of field monitoring and data collection.

Finally, if methane is to be actively controlled by the waste water sector, we would wish to see the enabling environment co-ordinated with the relevant EU legislation i.e. the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Industrial Emissions Directive both currently under revision, the Sewage Sludge Directive currently under evaluation, the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Waste Framework Directive and the climate legislation, in order to have a holistic and sustainable approach for the collection and treatment of the waste water which takes account of methane. If methane emissions are managed through reduction targets, they should be co-ordinated with climate targets to avoid confusion.

We would like to offer our support as expert network in order to input the process and to provide all the required elements related to methane emissions of the waste water sector.

For EurEau, **water matters.**

About EurEau

EurEau is the voice of Europe's water sector. We represent drinking water and waste water operators from 29 countries in Europe, from both the private and the public sectors.

Our members are 34 national associations of water services. At EurEau, we bring national water professionals together to agree European water sector positions regarding the management of water quality, resource efficiency and access to water for Europe's citizens and businesses. The EurEau secretariat is based in Brussels.



EurEau

With a direct employment of around 476,000 people, the European water sector makes a significant contribution to the European economy.