

## EDITORIAL



**Dr. Richard Seeber**  
Founder and  
President of the  
EP Intergroup on  
Water

**Water is the**  
**basis of life;**  
consequently all  
over the world  
water is in great

demand. Unfortunately, water also is a limited and vulnerable resource. The use of water affects the quality of this resource itself as well as the environment and nature in a broader sense.

Worldwide over one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water within fifteen minutes walking distance from homes. Europe is privileged in this sense as drinking water facilities have been available here for centuries.

People need water for their physical well-being, not only to drink or to do their washing but also as a resource for agriculture. Water is also of prime importance for the industrial sector as well, as it is used in a variety of ways for transport, cooling

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## CHALLENGES FOR THE INTERGROUP WATER FOR 2011



**Klara Szatkiewicz**  
President of EUREAU

During the summer of 2009 MEP Dr. Seeber - aided by EUREAU - took the initiative to seize the opportunity of the beginning of a new legislative period

to set up an EP intergroup on water with as main objectives:

- To raise the profile of water issues in the political debate in the European Parliament;
- To facilitate the integration of water policy in other relevant policies and vice versa;
- To facilitate the public debate on water policy and related issues among and between stakeholders.

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and heating, cleaning, washing and also as raw material. It is therefore essential to manage the supply and disposal of water wisely to ensure that clean water continues to be available to us and future generations at an affordable cost.

As an inter-parliamentary approach towards stressing the importance of water, I founded the Intergroup Water. The intergroup water aims

to provide a cross-party discussion platform to sensitize the topic water and to mainstream it in all policy fields. This newsletter serves as a complement to the Intergroup meetings, delivering further information and viewpoints on water related issues. I hope you enjoy reading this very first edition.

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This first year of the Intergroup has been very successful with a great variety of speakers on a range of topics, an average attendance between 70 – 100 participants, and many vivid discussions between the speakers and the public .

We are already looking forward to the next year and the challenges ahead. Of great importance will be the development of the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources and its different elements, the financial perspectives 2014-2020 and the reform of the cohesion policy, the reform of the Common agricultural Policy, and the development of a European Innovation Platform on a Water Efficient Europe in the context of Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn's communication on the Innovation Union. These

are all issues of great strategic importance for the European water sector which we intend to address in the coming year in the Intergroup Water.



*Intergroup Meeting with Commissioner for Environment, Janez Potočnik, Ms. Klara Szatkiewicz and MEP Dr. Richard Seeber, in May 2010.*

**Next Meeting**  
**8 February 2011**  
*Water and Regional  
Development*  
**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Johannes Hahn**



**By Professor Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament**

## WATER AND AGRICULTURE – MUTUAL INTERESTS AND A JOINT FUTURE

The EU can take pride in its actions in the agricultural and environmental policy areas. These two key areas have shown their relevance to be addressed on a European level, they have adjusted themselves to the needs of changing times and have delivered concrete results. The European Common Agricultural Policy, or CAP, is one of the first truly European policies, dating back to 1958. It has become one of the cornerstones of European integration and has strongly contributed to the development of Europe's agricultural sector. It provides us on a daily basis with the security of food and other products which answer to the high quality standards that our society expects from them. Today, it would be unthinkable not to coordinate our environmental policies on a European level. Water, air and biodiversity are precious resources that are not bound by national borders, and the only sensible solution to protect them is to tackle the challenges together, on a European level. The protection of these natural treasures will contribute to the quality of life of European citizens, providing concrete examples of the benefits of European integration.

The EU has the continued responsibility to further develop and improve its policies in the coming years. They need to be efficiently implemented, and their objectives need to be attainable and coherent. The CAP reform constitutes an opportunity to achieve these objectives for two heavily interdependent policy areas: agriculture and water. Both areas depend on the need for sufficient water of good quality. The CAP can make an important contribution to this shared goal.

The reform of the CAP comes at a crucial moment in time. Public spending budgets across Europe are

under pressure, whilst the expectations of European citizens for sustainable policies are increasing. It will constitute a considerable challenge to find synergies to achieve both. However, the value of the CAP is incontestable. It brings us security of food supply, promotes quality products and financially enables hard working farmers to continue their activities, which are a fundamental part of our European heritage.

At the same time, as stated by Commissioner Ciolos, the CAP is currently going through a legitimacy crisis. The European public demands that in return for the publically financed support, agriculture also contributes to other objectives of the EU, such as sustainability. Intensified agricultural practices are not always compatible with for example water quality and quantity objectives. Our water resources are of crucial importance and need protection. More emphasis in the CAP on the production of the so-called public goods and a renewed focus of the agricultural sector as the custodian of the rural area can be important elements for success. But they need to be combined with preventing increased administrative burdens and enhanced competitiveness.

To ally all of these elements is not an easy task. But it is a necessary task for the future of the CAP. With its new competence on agriculture under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament is committed to play an important and constructive part in the discussions. I therefore welcome the Intergroup on Water, under the presidency of Dr. Seeber, and I am anxious to see it provide us with valuable new insights and constructive ideas to further enrich the debate in this important area.





**Karl Falkenberg,**  
**Director**  
**General of DG**  
**Environment at**

#### the European Commission

Commissioner for Environment, Janez Potočnik, is planning to make 2012 the year of water and in this context to present a Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources. To this end, DG Environment (DG ENV) is carrying out an evaluation of the EU water policy that will be based on 3 main pillars:

- the assessment of the River Basin Management Plans delivered by the Member States under the Water Framework Directive (WFD),
- the review of the policy on water scarcity and drought and
- an assessment of the vulnerability of water resources to climate change and other man made pressures.

This evaluation has a twofold purpose:

- It will look back and assess the implementation and achievements of policies and measures in place to ensure the protection and availability of EU water resources, while identifying gaps, shortcomings and potential remedies.
- It will look forward at the evolving vulnerability of the water environment to assess the sufficiency of existing measures and tools, and evaluate potential new instruments to ensure a sustainable use of good quality water in the EU in the long term.

The Blueprint, which will integrate a "Fitness Check" of EU water legislation and policies, will synthesise policy recommendations drawing from the evaluation exercise, and will be accompanied by a number of reports and new initiatives, of a legislative nature where appropriate. A large

## 2012 BLUEPRINT TO SAFEGUARD EUROPE'S WATER

number of studies have been launched or are to be launched by DG ENV in cooperation with other services (JRC, ESTAT, RTD, EEA, etc.). The analytical results of this will deliver a solid knowledge base to formulate policy options.

It is our intention to conduct wide stakeholders' consultation in the preparation of the Blueprint and to closely associate the Member States, in particular via the Water Directors Meetings, and the Common Implementation Strategies (CIS) groups for the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

The final list of policy options for the Blueprint will emerge from the previously described reviews. The options will undergo impact assessment and be mainstreamed into Europe 2020 priorities, in particular promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy, but also developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, and fostering a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion. Options will be developed and assessed notably in the following areas:

- Demand management in water stressed areas;
  - improved water efficiency (urban infrastructure, buildings, industrial processes, agriculture, tourism facilities and water using products);
  - spatial measures to improve water retention, flood protection and water availability;
  - management of water infrastructure (drinking water, sewage, irrigation, flood management, etc.);
  - boost innovation in the water sector.

In each area, the impact assessment would cover the broad scope of potential policy options; from legislative approach to standardisation, incentives, funding and communication instruments.

# FOR THE CREATION OF A “WATER PARLIAMENT”



**Loïc Fauchon**  
**President of the World  
Water Council**

Access to water and sanitation for the unfairly deprived is one of the major priorities on the road

to human development.

Created in 1995, the World Water Council gathers today nearly 400 international organizations and more than 80 States. Its vocation is to be the “Voice of Water” who defends the cause at the heart of the pacific combat to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Beyond technological stakes, water has become a real political matter that concerns Governments, Parliaments and Local Authorities. Water, sanitation and the environment need a regulated legal framework adapted to each nation. But this framework also needs to be in coherence with international action.

The World Water Council has been working for some years now with numerous Parliamentarians – both from the North and the South – to establish a “help desk”. This initiative would facilitate the creation or improvement of legislation and regulatory texts on water.

The World Water Council organizes every three years the World Water Forum with a host country and city. Today, we are on the road leading to the 6th World Water Forum to be held in Marseille in March 2012. This global event will be organized jointly by the World Water Council, France and the city of Marseille. Together, we have decided to make this Forum a “Forum of solutions” and to give utmost priority to deliver on commitments and concrete actions rather than abstract speeches.

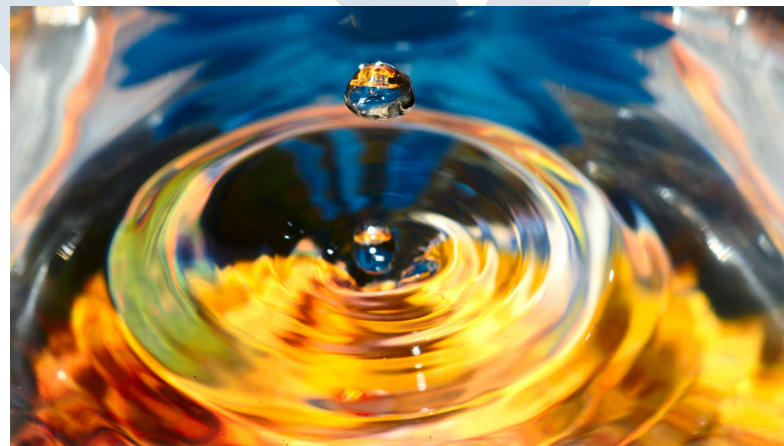
Within the framework of this global event, there is a Parliamentary Process that aims to suggest concrete solutions to encourage the work between Parliamentarians and the rest of the world while creating awareness around water.

As a symbolic gesture, the Forum has the ambition to unite a “Water Parliament” with several hundreds of nationally elected officials. The World Water

Council is attentive to all parliamentarians interested by this initiative and welcomes their suggestions and proposals.

The next World Water Forum also intends to strengthen the role of Regional Processes. Our will is to implement a participative bottom-up approach, where regional stakeholders, will play a key role in expressing their “Solutions for water”.

It is essential for us to closely associate from the beginning a wide range of European stakeholders to the European Preparatory Process of the 6th World Water Forum.



Indeed, there are important regional priority topics in Europe that deserve specific focus like the management of transboundary waters, the prevention of water related disasters, the protection of ecosystems, or the access to water and sanitation for underprivileged populations. The future of energy is also intertwined with that of water, and makes European water and energy policies key issues.

A multitude of regional voices shall find their way into the Forum so as to portray European specificities with regards to the water and sanitation situation.

Help us identifying solutions for water and the ways to implement them. Be more than ever the “voices of water” that will speak for Europe, in order to build a new and ambitious Regional Process. Help us give water a chance.





**Dr. Mike Farrimond,  
President of  
the European  
Water Technol-  
ogy Platform  
(WssTP)**

Innovation is the source of increased

productivity, and investment in it is voluntary and made on the expectation of a later return which may or may not appear. Therefore innovation implies taking risks.

Water companies worldwide are risk averse, and the regulatory regimes that oversee them play a part in this. Countries where step-changes in innovation have occurred are those where necessity, such as drought, water scarcity or population pressures,



## INNOVATION AND THE WATER SECTOR

has driven change and there has been public awareness, collective commitment and in some instances public funding. Singapore and Australia are areas where such pressures are forcing step change innovation.

In Europe the Commission's proposed Innovation Union has recognised the problem and has made specific reference to the difficulties of initiating and implementing technological innovation in the risk averse water sector. A focussed effort across Europe, supported by the Commission, will reduce the barriers to innovation by potentially reducing the risk of investing in new technologies at a large scale. There have been many small scale trials over the years but few make it to full scale demonstration and assessment because of the cost and risk of failure. Large scale demonstration sites would enable technologies to be built (and so lessons learned), to be evaluated (and so improved), and to be demonstrated (and so introduced to a wider market).

Since 2004 the WssTP has been working to bring together all actors with an interest in the European water sector to overcome the fragmentation in the sector and create an enabling framework for innovation that will allow the European water sector to meet Europe's water challenges and remain the global leader for the provision of safe, clean, and affordable water services while protecting nature.

### The regulated water sector

The water sector is subject to a wide range of environmental, public health and economic regulation and given the water companies' role in protecting public health and the environment, risky innovation may not be welcomed by companies, regulators or customers.

- Regulation can tend to limit the rewards of innovation, and it may not provide protection against downside risk and so discourage innovation
- On the other hand regulation can incentivise financial structures that are risk averse. Regulators, by their very nature, are risk averse and this can increase the cost and the risk of innovation by the companies.

- The absence of widespread competition in the water sector can substantially reduce the incentive to innovate as there is no competitive pressure
- The water sector has assets with long lives, typically 20 to 50 years, or longer for pipes, so the low rate of asset replacement does not give opportunity for regular shifts in technology

**New challenges facing the sector**

The water sector faces well-documented challenges, and needs:

- to respond to the consequences of climate and population changes – water efficiency, resilience of the infrastructure and carbon reduction
- to improve the quality of the aquatic environment and promote bio-diversity, driven by the Water Framework Directive
- to continue to replace ageing assets at an affordable rate whilst continuing to provide adequate service

Each challenge involves parties other than the water companies. The pace of innovation to address them will depend on the incentives for all players to act not just water companies. Incremental change is unlikely to deliver the changes needed to ensure that we can all live in harmony with our aquatic environment; the Commission’s proposals to stimulate the sector’s innovative capacity through the European Innovation Partnerships are timely and welcome



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