



HEAD OFFICE
10 Rue du Commerce
1000 Brussels, Belgium
+32 2 285 41 63
yepp@epp.eu

RESOLUTION

For a more sustainable European Union:

Towards a better European Water Management Strategy

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting via Zoom, 24.04.2021

Acknowledging that:

1. The management of water-related emergencies, such as floods and droughts, will become increasingly important for Europe. Nature can be unpredictable and due to the effects of climate change Europe should be prepared for an increased number of possible cases of floods or droughts throughout the year.
2. Floods have cost the EU over €150 billion in the period from 2002 till 2013 by damaging infrastructure, housing and agriculture. Investments in flood-risk management are therefore highly needed to prevent the annual damages of floods, which are estimated at around €5,5 billion every year. Furthermore, this cost is projected to rise to €23 billion annually by 2050 due to further climate-related and economy-related changes.¹
3. Droughts are physically the exact opposite of floods, but they can be just as destructive for societies and regions. About 20% of all Europeans live in water-stressed regions. Droughts have cost the EU over €86 billion in the past 3 decades alone. Furthermore, more actions are needed to secure enough fresh water in all EU regions and its neighbourhood countries.

Recognizing that:

1. As a coalition of Christian Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals, YEPP explicitly endorses the corner stone principle of subsidiarity.



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2. The EU Member States are and remain therefore primarily responsible for their spatial planning policies with regard to water.
3. The level of the European Union can be complementary to the level of the member states when it demonstrably fulfils a need that cannot be adequately dealt with on the level of the member states.
4. The European Union is particularly well placed to address cross-border issues. In particular, the EU is the most fit level of governance to coordinate the implementation of flood management and drought management measures in border regions. Floods and droughts simply don't stop at borders, so neighbouring member states are very often faced with the same problem.
5. The 2012 EU Policy Review for Water Scarcity and Droughts concludes that the overall objective of the Water Scarcity & Droughts (WS&D) policy - to revert the WS&D trends - has not been achieved.

YEPP calls on:

1. The EU Commission to be the driving force behind the implementation of flood and drought management measures in border regions. The Commission could stimulate for example the construction of more trans-boundary basins. The EU Commission should continue to ensure that the Water Scarcity and Drought policy of the EU is effectively executed in all EU member states.
2. The EU Member States to reduce the amount of hardened surfaces in urban areas, allowing the rain to soak in the ground and prevent our cities from flooding. More 'green' areas are needed as they will absorb more rainfall than concrete parking lots. These areas provide more open space for the inhabitants, enforcing social cohesion, while also improving the air quality and public health. Trees and vegetation will also prevent the cities from heating up to extreme temperatures during summer periods, which is necessary to keep our cities attractive to live and work in.



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3. The EU Commission and the EU member states to invest in the development of alternative ways to ensure fresh water such as cost-effective desalination installations, methods for wastewater reuse and to encourage the private sector to increase water use efficiencies by updating the corporate water policies.

References:

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2. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union. Brussels, 2007, Available from: URL <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0414:FIN:EN:PDF>
3. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Report on the Review of the European Water Scarcity and Droughts Policy. Brussels, 2012, Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0672>