

## **Intensified cross-border cooperation in order to combat the historically low water level in Europe's rivers and its negative environmental and economic consequences**

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Bucharest (Romania), 30/09/2022

### **Recognising that:**

1. The summer of 2022 has witnessed extremely high temperatures all over Europe, in several places beating long-lasting heat records from the past.<sup>1</sup>
2. Many European countries are experiencing historically low water levels in their rivers, resulting in a variety of negative consequences.
3. According to scientists, rainfall alone will not suffice to refill Europe's drying rivers.<sup>2</sup>

### **Acknowledging that:**

1. In some cases, in order to properly navigate some of these rivers, cargo had to be reduced, in consequence further straining supply chains and the economy overall.<sup>3</sup>
2. In other cases, cargo could not be shipped at all, hence causing even more damage to concerned states.<sup>4</sup>
3. In several rivers, for example the Rhine or the Danube, the low water levels uncovered old war ships - or parts of them -, which, if not lifted, can cause environmental catastrophes that are dangerous for both humans and animals alike.<sup>5</sup> The lifting of these vessels as well as the possible removal of explosives still on board is very expensive. Therefore, some states were unable to take the necessary steps within the appropriate time-framework.
4. The low water levels are posing an existential threat to fish and other animals living in and around the waters.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/europe-heat-wave-uk-records-hottest-ever-temperature/a-62522077>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/drought-in-europe-rainfall-will-not-affect-low-water-levels-in-germanys-rivers/a-62852500>

<sup>3</sup> <https://elements.visualcapitalist.com/visualizing-the-rhine-rivers-shrinking-water-levels/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.connexionfrance.com/article/French-news/Parts-of-French-canal-closed-to-boats-due-to-low-water-level>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.merkur.de/welt/freigelegt-munition-serbien-prahovo-donau-wasserstand-pegel-niedrig-kriegsschiffe-wracks-91737293.html>



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5. If the water levels continue to sink in this way, we are risking the drying-out of European rivers, which would have devastating consequences for nature and thus all our lives.
6. Rivers which suffer from droughts often suffer from flash floods due to the soil's inability to absorb water quickly.
7. Acknowledging that low water levels are an undeniable consequence of human-caused climate change.

**YEPP calls on:**

1. EU member states to intensify cross-border cooperation, in order to combat these historically low water levels in Europe's rivers.
2. The European Union to expand the transnational strategy to preserve European waters and their biodiversity.
3. The European Union and EU member states to facilitate investments in projects and research through the European Structural and Investment Funds to tackle this issue.
4. The European Union to use the European Structural and Investment Funds to support those European states most suffering from the negative consequences of these low water levels in order to prevent environmental catastrophes.
5. The EU and EU member states to recognise low water levels and climate change as interrelated and should be treated as such. Therefore, it is recommended to incorporate (low) water management strategies into climate combat strategies/plans/policies.