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President, European Commission

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Vice-President, European Commission

Jessika Roswall,  
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Commissioner for Economy and Productivity; Implementation and Simplification

Cc: Secretary-General Ilze Juhansone

Brussels, 18 February 2026

**Subject: Preserving water resilience, preventing the weakening of the Water Framework Directive**

Dear President, Vice-President, Dear Commissioners,

We write to you on behalf of associations representing the three pillars of the European Water Resilience Strategy, to express our strong concerns with the announcement, in the Communication on the RESourceEU Action Plan, of a revision of the Water Framework Directive in Q2 2026. **We urge the Commission to refrain from reopening or amending the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This will almost certainly result in its weakening, whereas the focus should be on accelerating its implementation and enforcement, as indicated in the Water Resilience Strategy.**

Water resilience is a central building block of climate adaptation; it is a prerequisite to Europe's green, digital and economic transitions, food security and the fulfilment of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation (HRWS). Our organisations have been supportive of the Commission's European Water Resilience Strategy, but water resilience cannot be achieved without strong legal targets to work jointly towards. Legal stability is crucial to drive the needed efforts and investments from water users, activities impacting water quality and quantity, and public authorities, and it relies on laws being constant, clear, and predictable. The new revision of the WFD, only a couple of months after the [provisional agreement](#) amending the WFD, Groundwater Directive and Environment Quality Standards Directive, will slow progress at a moment when decisive action is more needed than ever.

We recognise the need for the EU to increase its self-sufficiency for critical raw materials due to an extremely volatile international environment. It is however unacceptable to reopen the directive without assessing the impact of the proposed changes on the environment, on people's health and on other sectors such as drinking water supply, agriculture and tourism, and without evidence that the EU's current legislative framework is a significant barrier to new mining projects. Furthermore, proposing a revision of the WFD would be premature while the Commission has already announced new guidance on environmental permitting for the mining sector.

In its [Europe's Environment 2025](#) report, the European Environment Agency pointed out that “only by restoring the natural environment in Europe will we be able to maintain a high quality of life for European citizens”. The WFD, where correctly implemented, helps strike a balance between increasingly competing water needs and protecting nature, including the ecosystems we depend on for access to clean and sufficient water. It has helped reduce pollution locally and provides an emblematic common framework for delivering good ecological and chemical status of water bodies in the EU, to the benefits of its people and beyond. Limiting the pollution of aquatic ecosystems, protecting rivers, wetlands, glaciers, coastal waters and lakes and ensuring that groundwater resources are maintained is crucial to ensuring Europe's future water resilience.

Delivering a water-smart society requires regulatory consistency and legal certainty, allowing economic actors to assess risks, plan investments and innovate with confidence. With the average annual economic losses associated with weather- and climate related extremes 2.5 times as high in 2020-2023 as in the preceding decade, the urgency to act is growing. Any legislative changes at this stage would introduce legal uncertainty, disrupt planning, and risk undermining the significant public and private investments required to deliver tangible improvements on the ground.

Water is indispensable to public health and to the wellbeing of European populations. Furthermore, access to healthy and affordable water is key to food security and the prosperity of local businesses and sustainable farming. The European Commission has repeatedly stated its support for the HRWS, recognised by the UN General Assembly since 2010, following the nearly 2 million citizens who supported the first European Citizens' Initiative *Right2Water*. Maintaining the WFD is crucial to sustain those commitments and ensure reliable and affordable access to clean and safe water which is essential for disease prevention, food safety, ecosystem health, and societal resilience and economic prosperity.

Considering the above, we respectfully call on the Commission to:

- Refrain from reopening, amending or weakening the WFD;
- Prioritise the full and timely implementation and enforcement of the existing water acquis (including the provisional deal to update priority substances in surface water and groundwater) and the Water Resilience Strategy, including through pursuing the Structured Dialogues started at the end of 2025 with Member States;
- Ensure a clear, stable and predictable regulatory environment that safeguards progress, qualified workers and investment.

Yours sincerely,

AK EUROPA

Association of Water Suppliers in the Elbe River Basin (AWE)

BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

CEE Bankwatch Network

Citizens' Committee Right to Water

ClientEarth

Corporate Europe Observatory

EuroNatur Foundation

European Anglers Alliance

European Environmental Bureau

European Public Services Union  
 European Rivers Network  
 European Water Movement  
 Friends of the Earth Europe  
 Fundación Global Nature  
 German Association for Water, Wastewater and Waste (DWA)  
 International Association of Waterworks in the Rhine Basin (IAWR)  
 PAN Europe  
 Seas At Risk  
 Surfrider Foundation Europe  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 Wetlands International Europe  
 WWF European Policy Office

