

Declaration **11th European Youth Parliament for Water**

I. Introduction

We, the young representatives from 15 European countries – Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Switzerland and Turkey – have met in Yerevan and Lake Sevan, Armenia, from 12th to 19th May 2013, and have worked together for the improvement of water governance in Europe through youth participation. All the participants adopted the following declaration and would like to share it especially with:

- President of the National Assembly of Armenia, **Mr. Hovik Abrahamyan**,
- Chairman of State Committee of Water Economy, **Mr. Andranik Andreasyan**,
- European Commissioner of Climate Action, **Mrs. Connie Hedegaard**,
- European Commissioner of Environment and Water, **Mr. Janez Potocnik**,
- Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Mr. Thorbjörn Jagland**,
- European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, **Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou**,
- Chair of Intergroup on water of the EU Parliament, **Mr. Richard Seeber**,
- EC Director General of Environment, **Mr. Peter Gammeltoft**,
- National Parliaments of all the countries involved,
- Local and regional authorities of each country,
- NGO's involved in water governance and youth,
- Other stakeholders.

We, the European youth, want to be more involved in the decision-making process concerning water governance at all levels (local, national, European and international).

Every decision made today will affect the youths' future. This is why we participate in water governance.

II. General problems

According to us, the main problems in Europe concerning water governance are:

1. Generally, the populations of the European countries are not well informed about water governance. Most people do not try to involve themselves in water governance, because they are not aware of the importance of this topic.

2. The pollution of water and the over-consumption of this resource is an important problem. It has serious consequences on the balance of the different ecosystems and harms the environment.
3. The supply system of tap water is inefficient in some European countries. That makes the access to water difficult for the population, because the constant distribution and the quality of tap water is not always guaranteed.
4. In countries where an adequate access to water and a good supply system exists, the population is not aware of the value of this resource. They take the water for granted and some are tempted to manage it in an irresponsible way.
5. Some conflicts about water usage often occur in countries where supplying water is not a problem. Laws exist to regulate these conflicts, however they are not well implemented at a local level.
6. Access to water is a human right. Therefore, we have concluded that one of the problems is the possibility of making easy and unjustified profit from its exploitation.

III. General recommendations

To propose solutions to the mentioned problems, we recommend the following points in order to raise awareness about water related topics.

1. Communication

In order to share opinions and spread ideas between politicians, youth and other stakeholders, we create networks and involve existing ones. These networks will enable us to create a regional, national and international communication system on water governance.

Everyone has to be informed about the existence and the opportunity to participate in the European Youth Parliament for Water, and other networks (this also applies to education).

2. Education

The topic of water has to be part of the curriculum of educational institutions in every European nation. This will lead young people to develop a sustainable and resourceful way of treating water.

3. Field activities

In order to make people understand how water is treated, supplied, managed and wasted in Europe they need to see the issues themselves (e.g. visits, exhibitions). We want all stakeholders who are involved in the domain of water governance to be willing to share their information.

4. Political actions

Concerning *Communication*, the politicians will be involved in the created networks and projects. In addition, youth should have the opportunity to be involved in the political associations and debates around the topic of water governance. We want the local, regional, national, European and international politicians to be more concerned with water governance, so that the process of privatization could be strictly controlled.

IV. Concrete actions

Armenia – “Be water friendly”

We will organise **ecological camps, extra classes in schools** and **water conferences** for stakeholders. It will improve the awareness among citizens and explain them how they can be involved in water governance.

Austria – “World Water Day”

We will implement **the World Water Day in 2014** to raise awareness and present aspects of water situations in the other countries. It will take place in our school involving pupils between 8 to 14 years old from other schools.

Belgium, France and The Netherlands (Scheldt River Basin) – “Step by Step”

We will prepare **oral presentations** in classes and organise days on the field during the year for children aged 6 to 12 years old. For 12 to 18 years old youth we will organise **conferences** in classes about water governance.

Bulgaria – “Youth education for the future of water”

We, the Bulgarian Youth Parliament for Water, will organise **educational and field activities** to improve ecological skills and knowledge about water. Our aim is to educate young people and create a network between them.

Croatia and Latvia – “Hello I am water!”

We will educate children through series of workshops including **cartoon movies**, games and discussions in order to raise the children’s awareness and knowledge about water governance.

Germany and France – “Global Webpage”

We will create a **webpage** in order to share local projects, ideas and experiences of youth and other stakeholders, concerning water governance. This webpage will also provide news and general information about water. This webpage will be opened to every other delegation.

Greece – “Spider Web”

We will create a social network of young people from different European countries to put **pressure on political authorities** for establishing a better water management policy.

Moldova – “Solidarity On-Line youth platform for water”

We will create an **online platform for the active youth of Moldova** to encourage them to participate in water governance, exchange ideas and create projects. Our aim is to promote solidarity for water between young people and to facilitate the stakeholder’s contributions in assuring human rights for water.

The Netherlands and France – “Water we doing?”

We will **organise regular events** to encourage stakeholders to share information and raise awareness about water governance. We want to **empower citizens** to give them the capacity to defend their interests about water and the environment.

Poland – “Polish Youth Parliament for Water”

We want to gather the youth from Poland to **create the Polish Youth Parliament for Water**. The youth will have the opportunity to be involved and increase their knowledge about water. They will also get the chance to attend the next European and World Youth Parliaments for Water.

Russia – “Youth valley for P’yana river”

We will prepare **regular interactive activities** for young people between 16 and 22 years old. With other school districts, ecologists, tourists clubs and NGO’s we aim to create a network and to elect two young people for the water council in P’yana.

Switzerland – “Agis pour ton futur/ BD”

We will create a **comic strip** to explain the importance of water and its governance and it is going to be regularly published in our high school in which there are 1’600 students. The comic will also be published on the webpage created by the German and French delegations.

Turkey – “Voluntary for tomorrow”

We will organise a workshop led by experts about water treatment plants and pumping stations for young people aged between 18 and 25 years. Young volunteers will be encouraged to control waste water treatment plants with the permission of the mayors, to **create a better control mechanism**.

V. Commitment

We, members of the 11th European Youth Parliament for Water, are committed to execute and complete our projects, to spread our knowledge, experience and ideas. We commit to do our best to share the results of these projects on the commonly created webpage. We encourage the European citizens, water stakeholders and politicians to support the European Youth Parliament for Water and share this declaration.