

Declaration

12th European Youth Parliament for Water

I. Introduction

We, the young representatives from 17 European countries – Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kosovo, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, The Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine – have met in Douai, France, from 1st to 5th December 2014, in order to discuss the issues regarding water and energy, sanitation, biodiversity, climate change and the improved conservation of water resources. All the participants adopted the following declaration and would like to share it especially with:

- President of the National Assembly of France,
- Chairman of State Committee of Water Economy,
- European Commissioner of Climate Action,
- European Commissioner of Environment and Water,
- Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
- European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth,
- Chair of Intergroup on water of the EU Parliament,
- EC Director General of Environment,
- National Parliaments of all the countries involved,
- Councils of Water Basins in European countries,
- Members of World Youth Parliament for Water,
- Participants of 7th *World Water Forum*, in Deagu, South-Korea
- Local and regional authorities of each country,
- NGO's involved in water governance and youth,
- Other stakeholders.

We, the European youth, representing 96 million of young people in Europe, are concerned about the state and usage of the continent's water resources and its availability in the future. We are determined to address decision makers to investigate these matters and pay attention to our interests. We believe that water should be a priority on the European political agenda because it affects all European countries and citizens. We desire to have a sustainable future, which only can be achieved by taking diligent decisions keeping in mind the diverse water issues.

II. Our concerns

The European continent is considered to be an expert in water management but still water management practices in different countries are not efficient enough. Despite the fact that Europe is called "The Old Continent" there are still people who

do not have access to potable water and adequate sanitation, while at the same time in most European countries precious drinkable water is used to flush toilets.

Despite differences between sectors, industries, inhabitants and other stakeholders, they all share a dependency on a precious resource – water. This fact is problematic because communication between these different stakeholders is not efficient enough and therefore political and social conflicts emerge. Furthermore global warming is intensifying the conflicts and discussions on this thematic.

In 2010 during the UN's General Assembly the UN's Committee on Economy Social and Cultural Rights claimed access to water and sanitation as being a human right. It is shocking to notice that most people in Europe are not conscious about this and accept poor conditions of life concerning water issues. A lack of awareness and sense of urgency is widely prevalent amongst many of the key stakeholders.

III. General recommendations

We strongly encourage collaboration between decision-makers, experts and the youth.

Urbanisation is essential for human development but it should expand in a way that nature will be preserved. Green areas and recreational parks should be constructed in the newly-built parts of cities in order to maintain biodiversity.

We recommend politicians to implement tighter inspections of water and sanitation. This will ensure water as a human right and resource in their respective country. One possible way of funding is a financial solidarity mechanism in the water sector, that we highly suggest. We have also many innovative ideas about water management and technical issues and we invite you to discuss it with us.

We ask the European governments to fulfill their responsibility and investigate the water usage of the companies and industries operating in their countries. They should establish actions which would reduce the amount of waste-water produced during industrial production, incentivising them to reduce their negative environmental impact.

IV. Commitment

We commit to implement an annual 'Hour Without Water' event during the World Water Day on March 22nd. The aim of this event is to emphasize the importance of water by minimising the water usage for one hour (except for hospitals, schools and critical facilities).

We are passionate about organizing awareness raising activities (workshops, school courses, exhibitions, flashmobs) at local, regional, national and international levels. Therefore informing and educating people about their right to access water and sanitation. Those activities will change the attitude of the stakeholders about water management.

As young water ambassadors, we will actively promote ongoing Water Messengers¹ and WAW² campaigns, bringing them to the 7th World Water Forum.

We will cooperate with other water related youth networks on sharing knowledge and experience to achieve our common goals. We would like to encourage you to contribute your input!

V. Conclusion

The European Youth Parliament for Water concludes that Europe faces an abundance of challenges and opportunities. The youth must play a key role in this process.

We are facing increasing energy demand, rapid urbanisation, intensive agriculture and tourism. These phenomena are impinging on water quality, quantity and biodiversity. Moreover, many countries lack the resources to face and manage this. Others lack the water piping system, while a good proportion simply do not have access to potable water. Many competent authorities and other experts are already tackling these challenges, striving to comply with WFD³ and international directives.

Policies and strategies should be continuously revised to adapt to change and avert potential "water scarcity" crisis from mismanagement or neglect.

To conclude, we are committed to work together on a better future, raising awareness and mobilizing our generation to take action. We would encourage and invite you to join in so we engage all generations and all voices are incorporated.

Will you join us in the lead up to the 7th World Water Forum in Deagu and Gyeongbuk, South-Korea, April 12th until April 17th, 2015?

¹ <http://www.watermessengers.org/>

² <http://www.waw2015.org/en/>

³ Water Framework Directive

Our Partners:



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WATER MESSENGERS
citizen voices for water