

The European Water Resilience Strategy

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The European Parliament adopted by 470 votes to 81, with 92 abstentions, a resolution on the European Water Resilience Strategy.

Ambitious strategy

The resolution underlined that water is not only essential for health and life, but also a central element of the European economy, its competitiveness, and its efforts to adapt to climate change. Members called for an ambitious strategy to enable the EU to **better manage its water resources** and respond more effectively to current water challenges. They urged the Commission to integrate and systematically take into account the water dimension in the Union's internal and external policies.

Stressing the importance of water supply, particularly drinking water, and water security, Members believe that all environmental restoration projects should take into account water security aspects. They affirmed that **access to clean and safe drinking water and sanitation** is a human right that must be unequivocally guaranteed, and stressed that no one, in public places or private establishments, should be denied access to water supplied by a distribution network intended for human consumption, where available.

Parliament called on all relevant stakeholders to **accelerate the transition to circular and water-efficient industry and agriculture**, by promoting and investing in innovative solutions, including digital tools and technologies, resource recovery, water reuse, renewable energy production, infrastructure, nature-based solutions and inclusive governance mechanisms.

Rational use of water

Parliament called for the establishment of a **legislative framework setting sectoral objectives** for water efficiency and water abstraction at basin level, covering all water uses, including industry, energy, agriculture, public institutions and households. Members reaffirmed the need to develop a common EU methodology for setting objectives for water efficiency and water abstraction and called on the Commission to present a comprehensive policy for sustainable water management.

With a view to transitioning to a more sustainable and competitive agricultural model, Members stressed that **innovative irrigation solutions and practices** can improve water efficiency in agriculture. They encouraged the adoption of innovative irrigation solutions such as drip irrigation to enable active management of water levels and efficient use of water resources.

The resolution called for a **streamlined approach to EU legislation** to remove administrative barriers and promote safe and efficient water recycling in Member States and called on Member States to establish national water reuse and saving plans to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation in water management.

Members also called on Member States to **urgently address leaks** in water supply networks and to fully implement the monitoring and reporting requirements of the Drinking Water Directive, so that the Commission can set a threshold value for leakage by January 2028. They stressed the need to modernise sustainable urban irrigation networks, prevent leakages and reduce their water footprint.

Water pollution

Parliament believes the EU must do more to reduce water pollution from pharmaceuticals, chemical pesticides and fertilizers, antibiotic-resistant bacteria, microplastics, and other chemicals. Members called for the phase-out of **‘forever pollutants’ (PFAS)** and for the establishment of comprehensive EU-wide quality standards for PFAS in groundwater and surface water.

Members called on the EU to provide more support to local authorities to modernise wastewater treatment plants and promote water reuse to meet the EU's zero-pollution ambition.

Adaptation to climate change

Parliament called for climate change adaptation to be integrated into sectoral plans and policy measures relating to water and land use, with specific actions for regions facing particular vulnerabilities, such as Mediterranean areas, islands and outermost regions. It also called for the substantial strengthening of preparedness and response mechanisms for crises linked to water scarcity, droughts and floods. Member States and the relevant regional and local authorities are invited to draw up drought management plans, particularly with a view to ensuring the supply of drinking water.

Financing and pricing

Parliament called on the Commission to create a **separate, dedicated fund** for water resilience in the next MFF. Specific financial mechanisms should also be established within the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund to support smart technologies and investments in the water sector.

The resolution urged the Commission to promote innovative financing mechanisms, including payments for ecosystem services and green bonds, while ensuring clear regulation and safeguards against market distortions. The EIB should prioritise low-interest loans and credits for Member States undertaking large-scale restoration projects, with specific provisions to support economically disadvantaged regions.

Digitalisation and technological innovation

Members also encouraged the Commission to invest in artificial intelligence (AI) solutions, real-time leak detection, smart irrigation systems, and emerging technologies that improve water efficiency. They stressed the importance of digital tools for transparent data collection, monitoring, early warning systems, and strengthening the cybersecurity of critical water infrastructure.

The Commission, Member States and water suppliers are called upon to mainstream transparency and digitalisation as fundamental principles in the field of water management.