Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on promoting transnational governance on water in the interests of conflict prevention and peace

2025/2216(INI) - 17/06/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 431 votes to 111, with 103 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on promoting transnational governance on water in the interests of conflict prevention and peace.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right and a prerequisite for health, stability, security and peace. Around 2.2 billion people still lack access to safely managed drinking water, 3.5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation. Over recent years, conflict over water has exceeded cooperation.

The European Parliament's main recommendations are as follows:

- increase the role of **transboundary water governance** in EU external action, explicitly recognise water stress as a major security, geopolitical and humanitarian risk factor and fully integrate the prevention of water-related conflicts into the EU’s foreign, security and development policy;

- address the lack of **operational agreements** between governments sharing transboundary water basins and make all necessary EU expertise and technical and financial assistance available;

- provide the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU Delegations around the world, to this end, with the appropriate financial and human resources to support transboundary water management on the ground, within and between partner countries, and foster the development and implementation of blue diplomacy;

- ensure adequate and efficient **funding** for EU transboundary water management in EU external action under the next multiannual financial framework and strengthen the tailoring of EU external investments in water and sanitation access to fragile and conflict-affected contexts;

- further support the crucial work carried out by **environmental rights defenders** and civil society organisations in favour of water preservation, equal access and transboundary water governance;

- expand the geographic scope of EU transboundary water governance projects beyond certain parts of Africa and Central Asia to the Americas, the Middle East and North Africa, and East and South Asia;

- **strengthen sustainable water and waste-water management** and support capacity building and institutional strengthening in partner countries to improve the planning, governance and maintenance of water and sanitation services;

- strengthen **multilateral cooperation** notably within the UN on clean water and sanitation;

- preserve **biodiversity and the climate** by demanding that water management respond primarily to environmental interests;

- promote enhanced **international cooperation** to address the growing water crisis; ensure and improve access to clean and high-quality water and sanitation; promote sustainable water management, increase the reuse of water, tackle water pollution, overuse and waste;

- ensure that EU water initiatives worldwide address the persisting **data gaps** and lack of data sharing between governments;

- promote intergovernmental and regional cooperation instruments in the management of water resources;

- strengthen EU monitoring and **early warning** capacities through digitalisation and modern technologies;

- incentivise and finance **research** on sustainable transboundary water management, water sharing, cooperation and innovation;

- strengthen the role of **international law** and the competent international courts, and promote dialogue, mediation and regional solutions as primary tools for resolving disputes over transnational and systematically condemn the use of water as a weapon in conflicts.