

Brussels, 14 October 2025
(OR. en)

13877/25

ENV 993
CLIMA 429
AGRI 485
FORETS 86
ENER 518
TRANS 460
IND 422
SAN 620

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
No. prev. doc.:	13390/25
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on a European Water Resilience Strategy - Approval

1. On 4 June 2025, the Commission adopted a Communication on the “European Water Resilience Strategy”¹. The Communication sets out a comprehensive strategy aimed at restoring and protecting the water cycle, securing clean and affordable water for all and creating a sustainable, resilient, smart and competitive water-economy in Europe.
2. In response to the above Communication, the Presidency proposed draft Council conclusions, which were presented on 11 July 2025.
3. The draft conclusions were discussed by the Working Party on the Environment (WPE) at its meetings on 17 July and 11 and 29 September 2025.

¹ Doc. 9932/25 – COM(2025) 280 final.

4. The draft conclusions resulting from the above discussions were examined by the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 8 October 2025. No changes were made to the text. The HU delegation submitted the statement set out in the Addendum to this note, to be entered in the minutes of the Council at the time of the approval.
 5. In this context, the Council (Environment) is invited to:
 - approve the draft Council conclusions in the Annex to this note at its session on 21 October 2025.
-

Draft Council conclusions on a European Water Resilience Strategy**- Approval -****THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

1. RECALLS the European Green Deal², the EU water acquis, the 8th Environment Action Programme³ and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (particularly SDG 6)⁴;
2. RECALLS the recognition of access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as human rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015⁵, the Resolution on, inter alia, universal water and sanitation in healthcare facilities adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2023⁶ and the Resolution on effective and sustainable water policies adopted by the United Nations Environmental Assembly on 1 March 2024⁷;

² Doc. 15051/19 + ADD 1 - COM(2019) 640 final.

³ OJ L 114, 12.4.2022, pp. 22–36.

⁴ [Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to Transform our World | United Nations](#)

⁵ [A/RES/70/169](#).

⁶ [A/RES/78/130](#).

⁷ [UNEP/EA.6/Res. 13](#).

3. RECALLS previous Council conclusions including those on *EU's Resilience Against Flooding*⁸, *Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought*⁹, *The 8th Environment Action Programme*¹⁰, *the Farmer-focused Post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)*¹¹ and *Water in the EU's External Action*¹²;
4. RECALLS the European Council conclusions of 23 March 2023¹³;
5. RECALLS the Joint Communication on the European Preparedness Union Strategy¹⁴, the Communication on the EU Stockpiling Strategy: Boosting the EU's material preparedness for crises¹⁵ and Communication on the Vision for Agriculture and Food¹⁶;
6. RECOGNISES the European Parliament Resolution of 7 May 2025 on the European Water Resilience Strategy¹⁷ and the European Economic and Social Committee Declaration of 26 October 2023 on an EU Blue Deal¹⁸.

⁸ Doc. 16841/24.

⁹ Doc. 14146/24.

¹⁰ Doc. 11326/24 + COR 1.

¹¹ Doc. 16694/24.

¹² Doc. 14108/21.

¹³ EUCO 4/23.

¹⁴ JOIN(2025) 130 final.

¹⁵ COM(2025) 528 final.

¹⁶ COM(2025) 75 final.

¹⁷ [European Parliament resolution on the European Water Resilience Strategy.](#)

¹⁸ [EU Blue Deal | EESC.](#)

I. GENERAL REMARKS

7. WELCOMES the adoption of the *European Water Resilience Strategy* as a timely and essential framework to secure water for people, ecosystems, sustainable food systems and the economy in the context of a changing climate, increased water scarcity and droughts, severe pressure on ecosystems including increasing pollution and STRESSES the links to the European Ocean Pact and the upcoming European Climate Resilience and Risk Management initiative.
8. STRESSES the importance of a source-to-sea approach highlighted in the Strategy and WELCOMES the Commission's intention to strengthen this approach while reducing the burden on Member States with a proposal to revise the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
9. EMPHASISES that water resilience is a key cross-cutting issue requiring close cooperation between and within the EU institutions, Member States and stakeholder at all levels of society and RECOGNISES that some Member States have adopted national water resilience strategies.

10. EMPHASISES the urgent need to restore and protect the water cycle as the foundation of our water supply, as a basis for healthy ecosystems and as a way to ensure greater resilience against climate-related occurrences of water extremes such as floods and droughts and rising temperatures of freshwater and marine water, including coastal and transitional waters and UNDERLINES the importance of incorporating climate change scenarios into long-term water planning and infrastructure development, in line with IPCC assessments.
11. STRESSES the importance of enhancing EU water resilience across all sectors to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU economy and water sector, guaranteeing food and energy security, improving crisis preparedness and ensuring access to drinking water and sanitation for all as well as other water resources.
12. EMPHASISES the need to improve water services as well as distribution infrastructure and to ensure equitable access to water for all communities, particularly on islands and in remote and underserved areas. This includes investing in modernizing existing networks, development of innovative new solutions, reducing water loss, and enhancing the efficiency of water delivery systems.

13. TAKES NOTE of the current geopolitical situation and the external threats and conditions it imposes on the European Union and STRESSES that the implementation of the measures of this strategy should not have a negative impact on defence capabilities of Member States; UNDERLINES that water security is a strategic priority for the Union and that water services represent vital societal functions and HIGHLIGHTS the economic benefits of water resilience measures.
14. INVITES the Commission to report on the progress of the strategy's implementation and to undertake a mid-term review of the progress made in implementing the actions as well as planned next steps by 2027, while involving Member States on a regular basis.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

15. STRESSES the urgent need for improved implementation of existing EU water legislation across sectors and ACKNOWLEDGES that lack of funding and human resources has hampered the implementation considerably.
16. INVITES the European Commission with the goal of achieving full and effective implementation, to support Member States in addressing implementation gaps, as identified in the latest assessments of River Basin and Flood Risk Management Plans as well as to assist Member States in utilising available EU funding and in sharing best practises, as well as initiating the announced structured dialogues with all Member States without delay.

17. ENCOURAGES Member States and the European Commission to integrate water resilience more systematically across funding, policies and sectors, for example in agriculture, industry, bioeconomy, rural and urban development and tourism, while promoting an integrated and sustainable water management approach, including the source-to-sea approach, the combination of innovative technical solutions and nature-based solutions, circular economy, the water efficiency first principle, and the polluters pay principle.
18. RECOGNISES the importance of nature-based solutions, where possible, as effective, sustainable and multi-benefit measures for enhancing water resilience, restoring and maintaining ecosystems and addressing water-related challenges, and STRESSES that their deployment should be pursued in a manner that ensures an optimal balance and synergies with technical and engineering solutions.
19. RECOGNISES that solutions and measures should take into account the national, regional, and local differences within and between Member States including outermost regions, notably the different geographical, hydrological, climatic, ecosystem, infrastructural, economic and social conditions.

20. RECOGNISES the specific water-related challenges faced by several islands and island Member States, including their recurring limited access to freshwater resources.
21. UNDERLINES the importance of not adding, and where possibly reducing, administrative and financial burdens on Member States and the private sector when implementing the measures of this strategy.
22. EMPHASISES the need to ensure and support improved broad and timely transboundary cooperation and coordination on issues of water management, including with regard to floods and droughts and RECOGNISES the specific challenges of up- and downstream Member States and regions for transboundary waters.
23. REITERATES the importance of addressing water scarcity and enhanced water resilience through nature-based solutions, such as wetlands, and technical solutions, such as water reuse beyond agriculture and sustainable desalination and ENCOURAGES the European Commission to consider developing standards for safe water reuse beyond irrigation while UNDERLINING the need to respect the specific conditions of Member States and to maintain the flexibility and derogations provided for under the Water Reuse Regulation.

III. PREPAREDNESS AND SECURITY

24. STRESSES that water resilience is central to crisis preparedness, strategic autonomy, societal and financial stability, environmental sustainability and food security, particularly in the face of intensifying water scarcity, droughts, floods, pollution, and infrastructure vulnerabilities, as well as related security aspects and issues of inland navigation.
25. UNDERLINES the need to address and prevent water pollution at source, including excess nutrients and persistent and emerging pollutants such as Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) including trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) and CALLS ON the European Commission to take the necessary measures in line with the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability to phase out the most harmful chemicals; STRESSES the urgency for the Union to tackle pollutants at the source that pose a risk to our vital sources of drinking water, in particular those listed in the Directives pertaining to Drinking Water, Environmental Quality Standards and Groundwater, and UNDERLINES the need for reaching the good quality and quantity status for water in Europe as foreseen by the existing legislation such as the Water Framework Directive.
26. WELCOMES the European Commission's intention to adopt a European Climate Resilience and Risk Management initiative in 2026 and UNDERLINES the need for coherence with the Water Resilience Strategy; STRESSES the role of water resilience in climate adaptation, including through nature-based solutions and technical solutions, sustainable water management and resilient infrastructure.

27. SUPPORTS the strengthening of the EU's water infrastructure security as well as real-time early warning systems for floods and droughts and the development of Copernicus, including through the development of a Water Data Hub to harness the potential of Earth Observation to support water management; EMPHASISES the importance of ensuring open and equitable access to these tools and data, as well as adequate financial and technical support for their effective use.
28. STRESSES the need to address the security aspects of water resilience, including resilience to external disruptions to water supply and wastewater infrastructure and water quality, including sabotage, cyberattacks and other external threats.

IV. COMPETITIVENESS, DIGITALISATION AND INNOVATION

29. SUPPORTS the strategy's aim to foster a competitive water-smart economy by simplifying legislation and reducing administrative burdens.
30. SUPPORTS reducing water demand across all sectors where needed, improving efficiency, promoting the use of non-conventional water resources where appropriate, addressing issues with water leaks and ageing infrastructures, tackling illegal water abstraction, enhancing green-blue-grey infrastructure solutions and reducing over-abstraction while respecting national and regional differences.

31. UNDERLINES the strategic and essential role of non-conventional water resources, including safe reuse of treated wastewater and sustainable desalination, particularly for Member States with limited freshwater availability.
32. RECOGNISES that agriculture and food production are strategic sectors for the European Union; UNDERLINES that safeguarding food security presumes a competitive and economically viable agricultural sector and EMPHASISES that to ensuring food security requires a sufficient quantity of good-quality water and management of the agri-food sector's water demand and impacts as well as reducing water losses and supporting sustainable farming practices and technologies to increase the agricultural sector's water resilience while maintaining and enhancing water ecosystem services.
33. WELCOMES the Commission's recommendation on the *Water Efficiency First* principle and the development of a joint methodology for water efficiency targets, while respecting national and regional differences including hydro-climatic differences, recognising water-related specific challenges, and taking into consideration progress already achieved, and different starting points.
34. ENCOURAGES the European Commission to support the development of technologies that reduce water consumption in key priority sectors such as energy, industry, agriculture, the construction industry and tourism.

35. ENCOURAGES the use of digital tools to improve monitoring, analysis, reporting, visualisation, management of water infrastructure, and public awareness as a way to improve water management and enhance water efficiency across sectors and industries, noting notably the need for support for small and medium-sized enterprises and microenterprises and SUPPORTS the development of an EU-wide Action Plan on digitalisation in the water sector, including smart metering, remote monitoring, and the use of artificial intelligence to predict hydrological extremes and optimise operations.
36. UNDERLINES the need for research and innovation in water management and water technologies to strengthen competitiveness, stimulate investments and boost Europe's businesses as well as academic and research institutions and HIGHLIGHTS that research and innovation should cover all phases, including research, piloting, and initial implementation to support the scale-up, market uptake and deployment of technologies for water resilience.
37. EMPHASISES the need for strengthening capacities of vocational and higher education in water management to provide the adequate human resources for the water sector and UNDERLINES that educational and awareness campaigns should be conducted and financially supported, targeting children, youth, and schools at all levels, as well as the general public, and SUPPORTS the development of water-related study programmes and professional training to build long-term expertise in the sector.
38. ENCOURAGES increased public awareness of responsible water use and to implement the European Water Resilience Strategy together with EU citizens, in particular the youth and ENCOURAGES increased consumer awareness of products' water footprints.

V. FINANCING AND INVESTMENTS

39. RECOGNISES the significant investment needs to implement the water resilience agenda and STRESSES the importance of ensuring adequate and accessible financing by mobilising both public and private resources, including available EU-funding, while respecting the principle of technology neutrality within the water sector.
40. TAKES NOTE of the elements related to water resilience in the European Commission's proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, including opportunities to promote water resilience under the Common Agricultural Policy and other programmes.
41. UNDERLINES the diverse conditions of Member States; RECOGNISES that the revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, the Drinking Water Directive, the Nature Restoration Regulation and the Water Framework Directive introduce additional requirements that entail significant financing needs.
42. WELCOMES the European Investment Bank's Water Resilience Programme and the creation of a *Sustainable Water Advisory Facility* to enhance project pipelines and support Member States and regions, also with the aim of enhancing the resilience of water infrastructure tailored to the specific conditions of the different Member States.

43. URGES Member States to mobilise private funding as well as make use of available EU funds for water resilience projects and CALLS ON the European Commission to actively support Member States in implementing existing legislation as well as achieving the goals of this strategy.
44. ENCOURAGES economic incentives for sustainable water use, including water-smart technologies and practices as well as nature-based solutions across sectors, and those supporting start- and scale-up initiatives; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of taking account of the principle of the recovery of the costs of water services in line with the provisions of the Water Framework Directive.
45. STRESSES that the cost of inaction should be considered when assessing the needed investments in water infrastructure.

VI. GLOBAL ACTION

46. RECOGNISES that water resilience and protecting the global water cycle are crucial for sustainable development, the realisation of human rights, peace and stability and the need to ensure compliance with the International Humanitarian Law to support safety and security of water resources, water personnel, and infrastructure in conflict zones.

47. STRESSES the need for enhanced global water diplomacy and EMPHASIZES the importance of ensuring that water is effectively integrated into the global agenda and other international processes aiming for more coordinated progress building on existing multilateral fora.
48. UNDERLINES the leading and bridging role of the EU in enhancing sustainable and inclusive water management at the global level, including improved water governance, integrated water resource management, better mainstreaming of water in other global processes, climate adaptation, access to drinking water and sanitation for all, and an improved source-to-sea approach.
49. RECOGNISES the different competencies between Member States and the European Union; WELCOMES close collaboration in the context of multilateral conferences, coalitions, and partnerships in order to mainstream water in intergovernmental processes, and realise ambitious and action-oriented outcomes; STRESSES the strategic importance of water resilience in strengthening the EU's competitiveness and resilience at the global level and ENCOURAGES making use of the EU's external financial instruments in this regard, including through the Global Gateway Strategy.
50. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of strengthening international cooperation on transboundary river basins, and CALLS for further cooperation with candidate countries and neighbouring regions, in particular within the Danube River Basin, in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas, as well as strategic partners globally, and RECOGNISES the value of bilateral agreements and exchange of best practices to improve sustainable water use and reduce risks of conflicts over water resources.

51. REAFFIRMS the EU's strong commitment to the global UN water agenda and CALLS for promoting accession to and application of the UNECE Water Convention and making use of the Convention's platform and tools as well as the UN Water Course Convention; ENCOURAGES the implementation of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation as well as the consideration of water as a cross-cutting issue in the UN80 initiative.
 52. ADVOCATES for ambitious, inclusive and action-oriented UN Water Conferences to be organised in 2026 and 2028, and CALLS for a regular intergovernmental UN process on water beyond that timeline.
 53. RECALLS the security dimension of water resilience, recognising its role in preventing instability and fostering peace worldwide and STRESSES the urgent need to address war crimes targeting water systems, the water cycle, and their long-term sustainability and REITERATES the resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter and international law.
-