



Council of the European Union  
General Secretariat

**Brussels, 02 February 2026**

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## **MEETING DOCUMENT**

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**From:** General Secretariat of the Council  
**To:** Working Party on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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**Subject:** The European Water Resilience Strategy – Presentation by the Commission

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In view of the meeting of the Working Party on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on 4 February, please find enclosed, for information, a presentation by the Commission on the above.

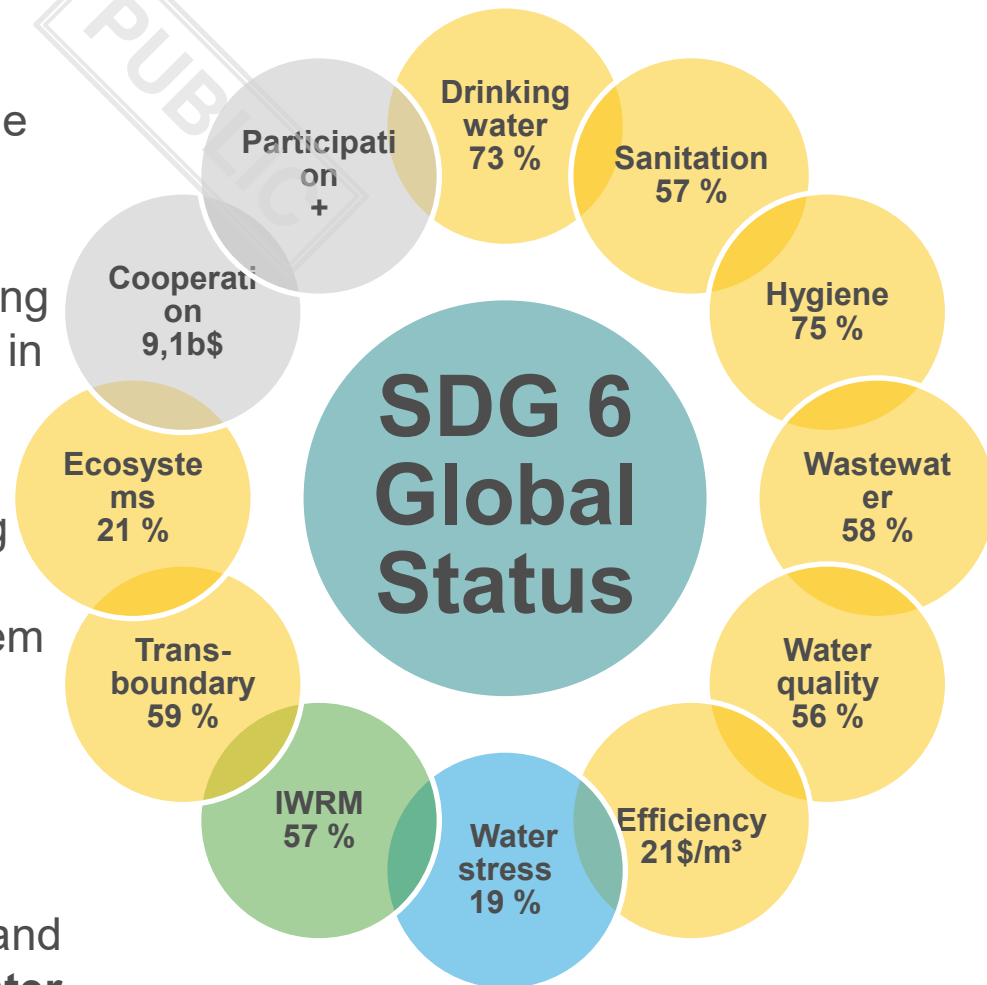


# European Water Resilience Strategy

Agenda 2030 – SDG 6

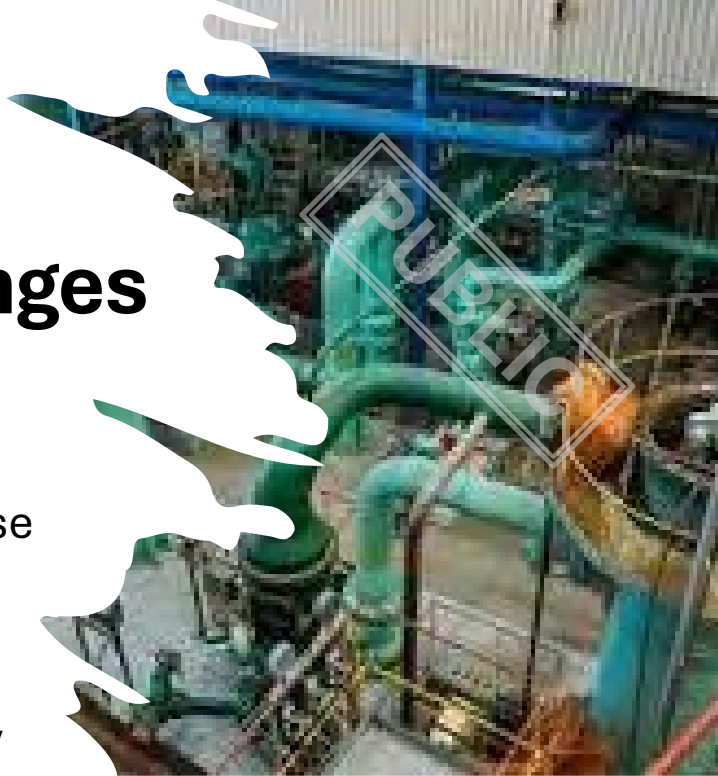
# Agenda 2030 and SDG6

- The **Agenda 2030** is a roadmap for the future with the overriding objective of enabling people to live in dignity everywhere in the world
- It includes a dedicated **sustainable development goal for water (SDG 6)** reflecting the importance of water and sanitation issues in the global political agenda. **Water has a key role in achieving several other SDGs.**
- SDG6 includes **6 targets**, addressing drinking water, safe sanitation, water quality, water scarcity, improved management and ecosystem restoration.
- **Progress** in achieving the targets and its indicators is different, with water quality and improved water management lagging behind.
- The **UN System Wide Strategy on Water** and the appointment of the **UN Special Water Envoy** are key tools for global water action



# Towards EU water resilience – Challenges

- Due to climate change, water scarcity and flood risk on the rise in Europe
- Water stress affects ~ 20 % of the EU territory and 30 % of the EU population on average every year
- Floods have caused € 170 billion in economic damage over the past 30 years.
- Unsustainable water resources management and land use, ecosystem degradation, pollution, and urbanization
- Increasing demand for water



# EU WATER RESILIENCE

Protect the  
water cycle

Build a  
water-smart  
economy

Secure  
clean water

## European Water Resilience Strategy – Objectives

The pathway to water resilience includes:

- **Restoring and protecting the water cycle** as basis for sustainable water supply – green and blue water
- **Building a water-smart economy:** promoting water savings, water efficiency, water reuse and recycling across sectors, while supporting competitiveness
- **Securing clean and affordable water and sanitation:** vulnerable & marginalized groups and empowering citizens for water resilience

EU legislation and policies provide a strong basis to achieve these objectives



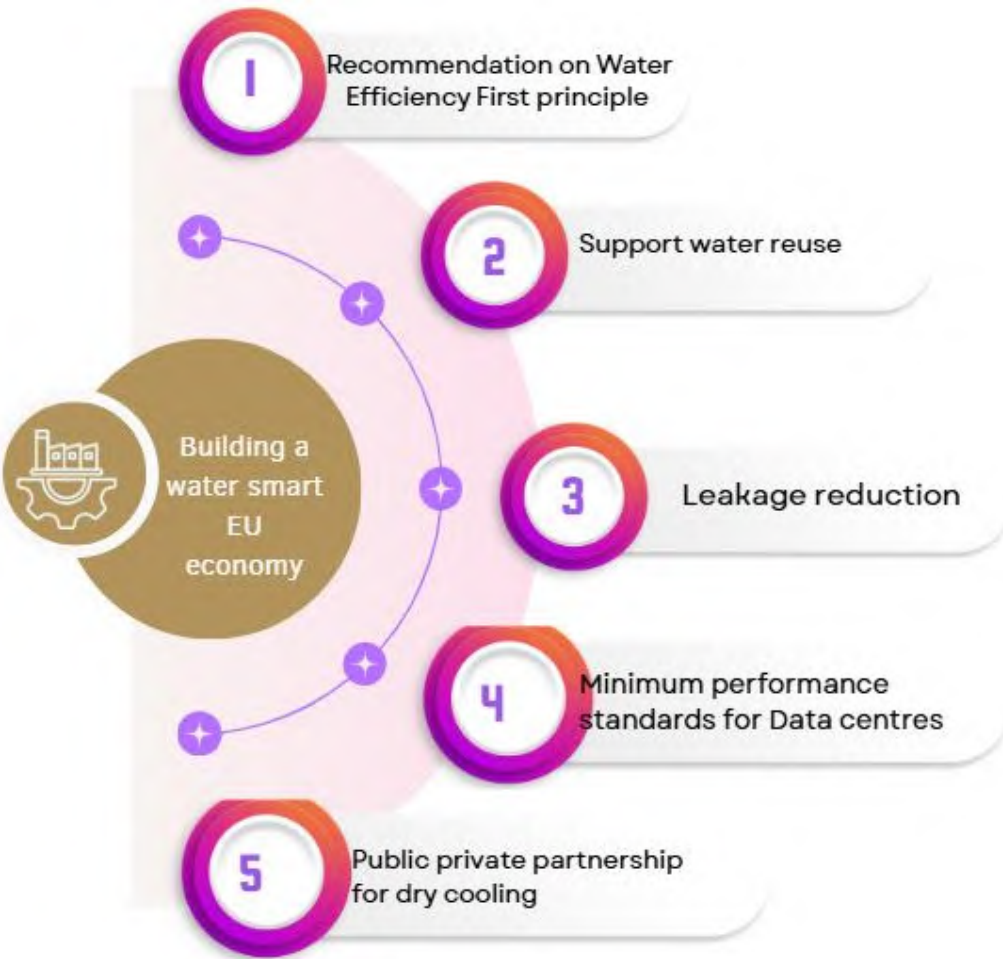
# Restoring and protecting the water cycle



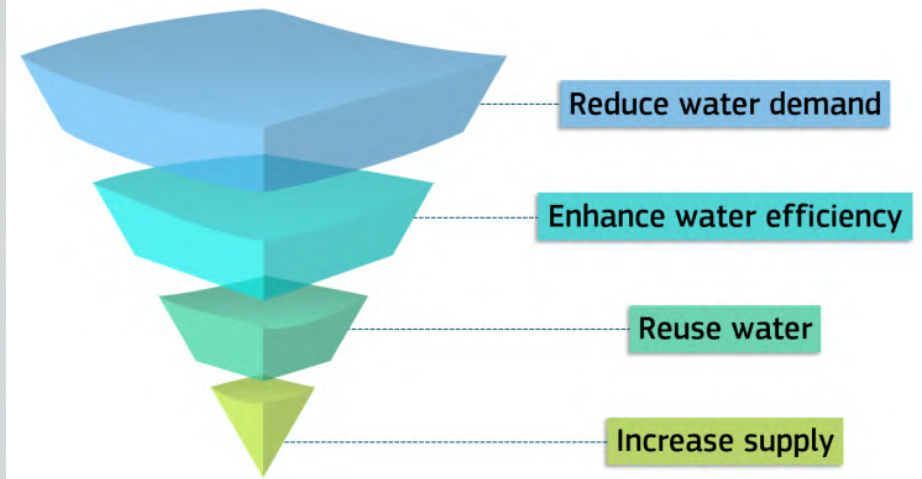
Green, Blue, Grey water in a context of adaptation



# Water smart economy

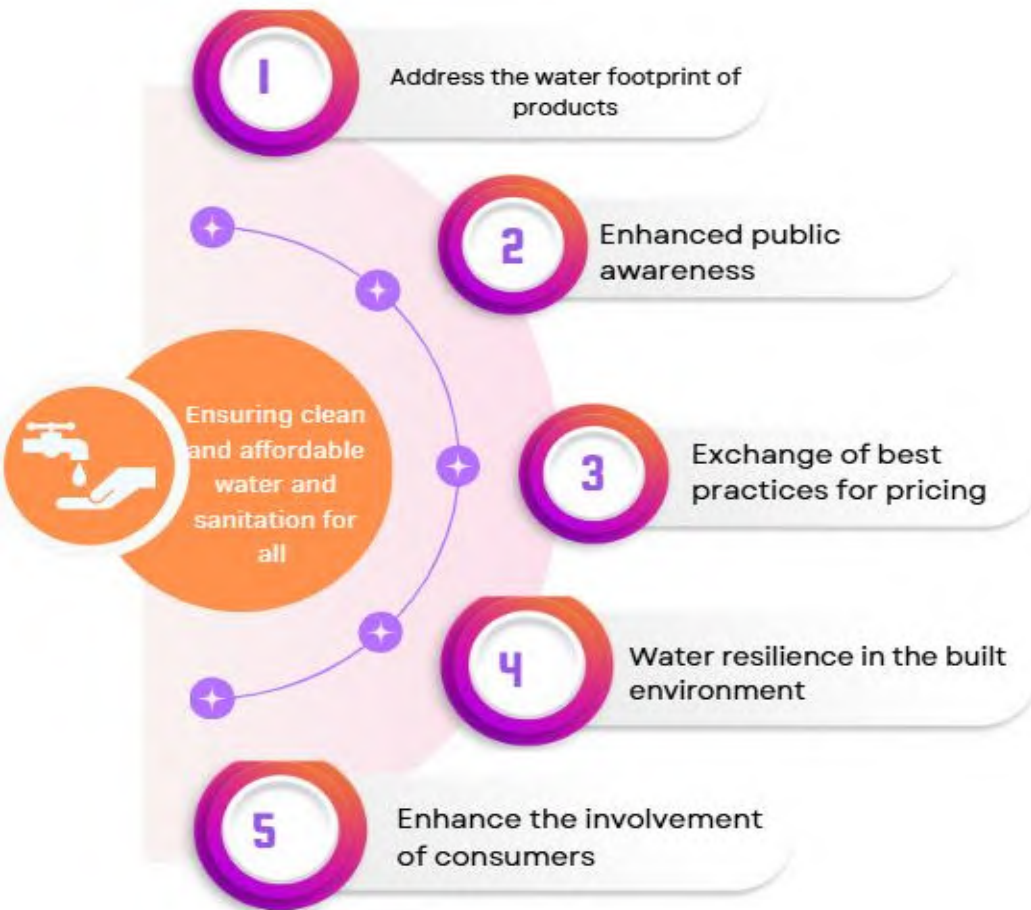


## Water Efficiency First - Hierarchy



# Clean water and sanitation for all

Better control of the resource





# Implementation and governance

PUBLIC

## AREAS OF ACTION

### Implementation and Governance

CONDUCT STRUCTURED DIALOGUES WITH MS



ENHANCE TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION



VISUALISATION TOOLS - WATER SMART SPATIAL PLANNING





# Finance, Investments and infrastructure

PUBLIC

## AREAS OF ACTION

### Finance, investments and infrastructure

LAUNCH OF THE EIB WATER PROGRAMME AND ADVISORY FACILITY



MIDTERM REVIEW OF COHESION POLICY - WATER RESILIENCE A NEW PRIORITY



ESTABLISH A WATER RESILIENCE ACCELERATOR



EIB to support with over 15 billion Euro in 2025-2027



# Research, innovation, skills

PUBLIC

## AREAS OF ACTION

### Research, innovation, skills

WATER RESILIENCE R&D STRATEGY



EUROPEAN WATER ACADEMY



KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY  
EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND  
TECHNOLOGY



**EU water industry:**  
a global leader that  
provides essential services  
and produces over 40% of  
global patents in water  
technologies




# Security and preparedness




## AREAS OF ACTION

### Security and preparedness


**PROTECTING CRITICAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**



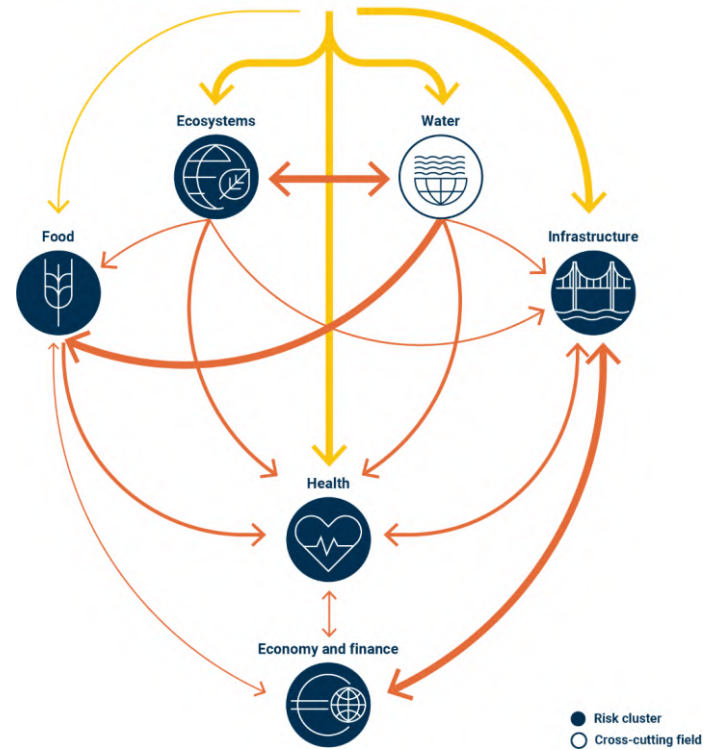
**ENHANCE THE USE OF EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS**



**EUROPEAN CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN AND THE PREPAREDNESS UNION STRATEGY**



Direct impacts and risks and Cascading impacts and risks



# Towards global water resilience – Challenges

## We can no longer take water for granted

- 2.2 billion people (3/10 people) lack **access to safe drinking water**, with 40% of the world's people affected by water scarcity (to raise to almost half suffering water stress by 2030).
- More than half of the global population (4.2 billion people) does not have **access to safe sanitation**, while 80% of the world's wastewater is discharged untreated into the environment, leading to pollution, marine litter and diseases.
- Water and sanitation-related diseases remain among the major **causes of death** in children under five.
- Global **water demand** will surpass what is available by 40% in 2030.
- **Wetlands are disappearing** three times faster than forests across the globe: since being nature's most effective water managers, this increases the risk of desertification and floods.
- **Transboundary** competition and conflicts over water are growing.
- **Climate impacts** like extreme heat, catastrophic floods, prolonged droughts and forest fires are increasing in frequency and severity and will continue to do so, in Europe and globally.
- Worldwide, water-related **disasters** displaced 40 million people and inflicted more than EUR 480 billion in damages in 2024 (while overall 90% of disasters are water-related).
- The **financing gap** for the water sector is estimated to range from \$182 billion to \$664 billion annually.

2.2

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4.2

billion people  
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untreated

40

Million people  
were displaced  
by water-related  
disasters

# Towards global water resilience – Solutions



Provide **access to safe drinking water and sanitation** as a human right. The EU, together with the international community, is committed to ensure that no one is left behind and that services and facilities provided are sustainable for the benefit of future generations.



**Protect and restore aquatic ecosystems** for sustainable development, climate mitigation and adaptation. The protection and restoration of watersheds and of water related ecosystems (including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes), and the deployment of nature-based solutions, is one of the cornerstones of the EU environmental policy.



Promote more **integrated approach to the management of water resources** across sectors. Management must address the whole hydrological cycle, including source-to-sea perspectives, with integrated planning and policy-making across sectors and borders supported by the necessary governance structures.



**Promote circularity in the use of water** for industry, energy and agriculture by increasing water efficiency and water reuse. Water is a finite resource that must be used efficiently. We must reduce demand across all sectors of the economy by promoting water savings, efficiency, and reuse.

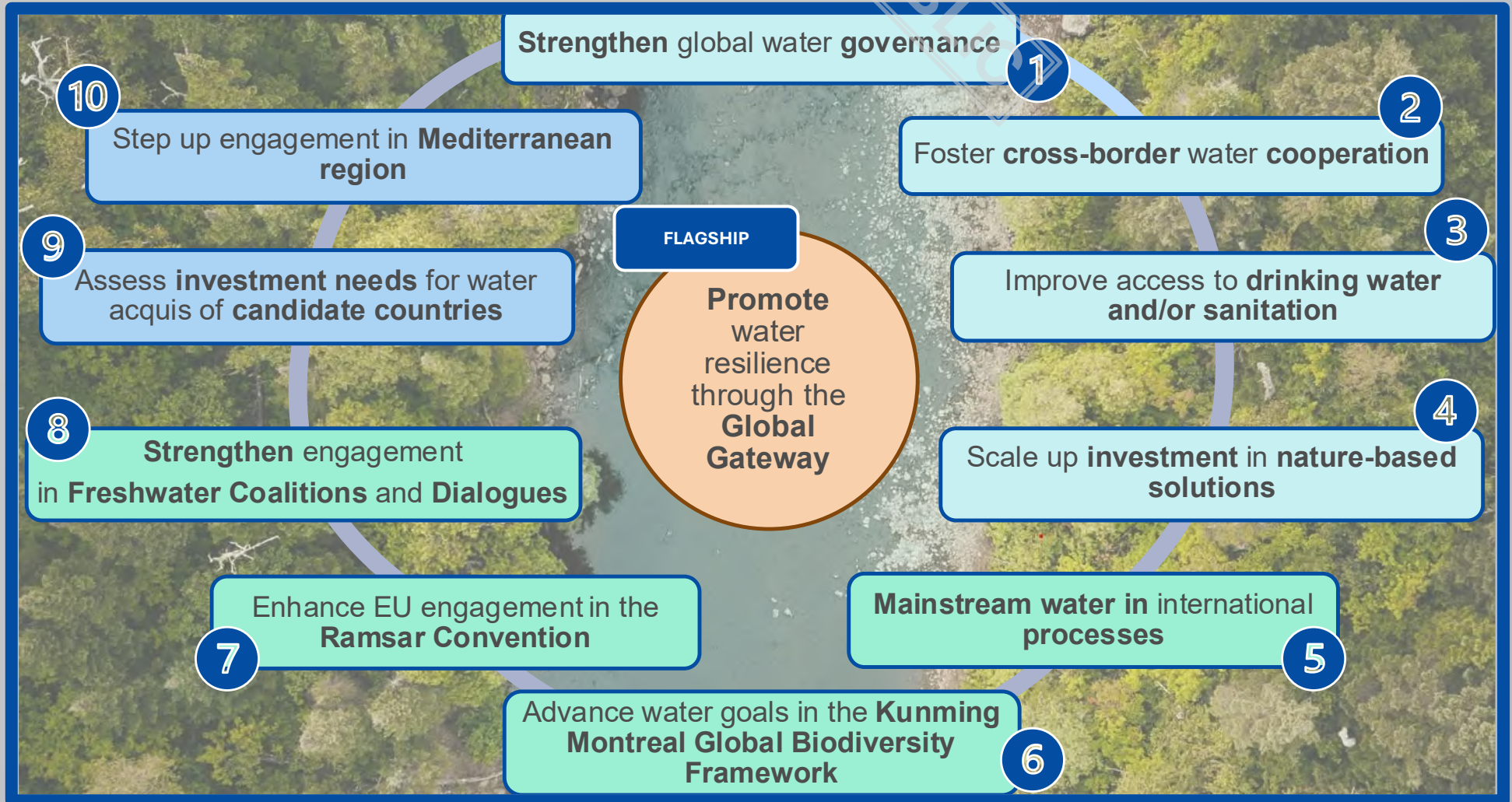


Develop **transboundary water cooperation** as a catalyst for peace and security. It delivers better knowledge and understanding, adoption of joint plans and programmes and improved water management.



Mobilise public and private **finance, research and innovation**, and knowledge sharing.

# European Water Resilience Strategy – Acting Globally





# 2026 UN Water Conference to accelerate the implementation of SDG 6

2-4 December, UAE

Co-hosts: Senegal & UAE

## Themes of the Interactive Dialogues

= adopted by consensus on 9 July

= Summary of proceedings as official outcome

[Background note](#)

### Dakar HL Preparatory Meeting (26-27 January 2026)

- “Roadmap from Senegal to the UAE”
- Preparation of concept notes for the Interactive Dialogues
- Stakeholders consultations by co-chairs
- Potential deliverables

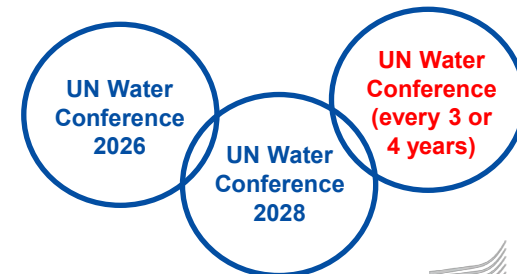
- **IAD(A) – Water for People:** The human rights to water and sanitation, including for those in vulnerable situations, for healthy societies and economies  
**Ghana & Switzerland**
- **IAD2 – Water for Prosperity:** Valuing water, Water-Energy-Food nexus, advancing integrated and sustainable water resource management, wastewater and water-use efficiency across sectors, and economic and social development  
**Spain & China**
- **IAD3 – Water for Planet:** Climate, Biodiversity, Desertification, Environment, Source to Sea, Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction  
**Japan & Egypt**
- **IAD4 – Water for Cooperation:** Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, including Scientific Cooperation, and inclusive governance  
**Finland & Zambia**
- **IAD5 – Water in Multilateral Processes:** SDG 6, the 2030 Agenda and beyond, and global water initiatives  
**Germany & Mexico**
- **IAD6 – Investments for Water:** Financing, technology & innovation, and capacity building.  
**France & South Africa**



# EU position



- ⇒ *Build on the UN 2023 Water Conference ⇒ **Water Action Agenda (WAA), UN SWS on Water and Sanitation, UN Special Envoy on Water***
- ⇒ *Contribute to the establishment of a **regular intergovernmental UN process on water** ⇒ **regular UN Water Conferences**, with negotiated outcomes and a monitoring mechanism*
- ⇒ *Provide **political guidance** ⇒ enhancing water resilience, climate adaptation, transboundary water cooperation, Nature-based Solutions (NbS), mainstreaming water, water investments*



# More information

[European Water Resilience Strategy](#)

[EU Council conclusions on Water in the EU's external actions \(2021\)](#)

[EU Council conclusions on Water Diplomacy \(2018\)](#)

[EU Human Rights Guidelines on Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation \(2019\)](#)

[EU efforts on the global water agenda](#)

[#WaterWiseEU campaign materials](#)

[UN 2023 Water Conference](#)

[UN 2026 Water Conference](#)

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