

Commissioner Phil Hogan for Agriculture and Rural Development
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels – Belgium
phil.hogan@ec.europa.eu

Brussels, 30 January 2015

Subject: Main priorities for water under the Juncker Commission 2014-2019

Dear Commissioner Hohgan,

On behalf of key members of the EU Water Alliance, we congratulate you on your new post as Commissioner. A solid water services sector, including over 136.000 SME's directly involved in the value chains of the water-related economy, is a critical economic and social driver for implementing *a new agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change*. Developing a strong agriculture and rural development portfolio and ensuring cross-compliance and resource efficiency within the CAP reform will be essential to address water management within the agricultural sector.

Further to the key messages of the Juncker's Commission, presented in the Annex to this letter we would like to discuss with you the **importance of water within the context of the new EC agenda** by sharing our ideas on cross-cutting water themes amongst the priorities for action, thereby ensuring better cooperation.

Safeguarding Europe's resources has been a priority for the EU since it adopted specific legal instruments for water protection in the late 1970s. However, internal Commission assessments, for example the Court of Auditors Report, concluded that the water policy goals are not successfully integrated in the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Agriculture is still the main source of nutrient and other pollution in water, and irrigation greatly varies in Europe between 24% up to 80% in the south. As the main user of water, agriculture therefore has a major role to play in the smart management of water quantity and quality and ensuring sustainable Rural Development.

On 13 May 2014 the European Court of Auditors published a special report (No 4/2014) of the European Court of Auditors entitled "**Integration of EU water policy objectives with the CAP: a partial success**". The audit highlighted weaknesses of the two instruments used to integrate water concerns in the CAP (namely cross-compliance and rural development) and pointed out delays in implementation of the Water Framework Directive.



Therefore, we invite you to discuss the following priorities for water for 2014-2019 relevant to your portfolio:

- The interaction and mutual dependence of agriculture and water management. A reformed Common Agricultural Policy should play a critical role in achieving EU water policy objectives. For example:
 - i. Modifications to the current instruments (cross-compliance and rural development) or, where appropriate, new instruments capable of meeting EU water goals and tackling significant water pollution (including micropollutants) and over-abstraction challenges;
 - ii. Ensuring that Member States implement pollution prevention and control measures at the source of its generation, and have methodology to measure the pressures placed on water by agricultural practices;
 - iii. Combining regulatory and voluntary stewardship approaches to drive real change where the CAP budget secures delivery of public goods.
- The synergies between European Innovation Partnerships on Water and Agriculture are maximised to their full potential.

We are looking forward to scheduling a meeting to discuss these items at your earliest convenience. The contact point for further communication is Durk Krol, WssTP Managing director, durk.krol@wsstp.eu, tel.+32-473805042. We thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Members of EU Water Alliance: Acqueau, EurAqua, European Water Association (EWA), European Water Partnership (EWP), Networch₂O, WssTP.

Enclosure: EU Water Alliance: Main priorities for water under the Juncker Commission (2014-2019)

