

Launch of the European Water Vision for the 21st century and Aquawareness, 30th June 2008 European Parliament, Brussels



On Monday, 30th June 2008 the European Water Vision and Aquawareness, the European water awareness and water stewardship programme, were launched at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium. Both, the Vision and Aquawareness, were initiated by the EWP and developed in close cooperation with MEP Dr. Richard Seeber as well as with wide ranging stakeholders. The mission of the Vision states that *"we have achieved sustainable water resource management and universal access to modern and safe water supply and sanitation by 2030 because the inhabitants in Europe value water in all its dimensions – in its economic, social, environmental and cultural importance"*. With the new voluntary program Aquawareness innovative cooperations will tackle Europe's water challenges with the aim to shift mindsets and alter behaviour, contributing to a movement of change in Europe. The European Water Awareness Programme will introduce a water saving and efficiency culture among political decision makers, key stakeholders and inhabitants within Europe. The Water Stewardship Programme will establish and provide voluntary schemes for sustainable water governance across public private and industrial sectors.

The European Union Institutions strongly support the programme, calling it a milestone towards sustainable water management. Additionally, the new ways of partnerships for realizing and implementing the European Water Vision for the 21st century were praised.

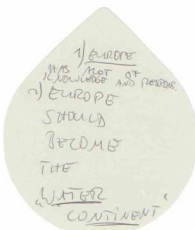
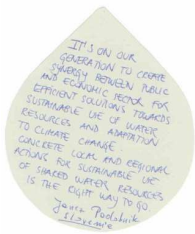
"The European Water Partnership is a process which significantly contributes to the more efficient implementation of EU legislation on water and the aquatic environment while also improving business competitiveness and the quality of the local environment. It is a development opportunity and, as such, is arriving at just the right time, the time when it is urgently needed at both the European and the world level."

Janez Podobnik, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia



"Many tasks lie ahead of us if our water vision is to come true. The challenge of water scarcity and droughts needs to be addressed both as an essential environmental issue and also as a precondition for sustainable economic growth in Europe. With this conference we have a unique chance to set an example in the right direction. Europe should be ready to take its share of responsibility to protect the water resources worldwide."

Richard Seeber, Member of the European Parliament



Launch of the European Water Vision for the 21st century and Aquawareness, 30th June 2008 European Parliament, Brussels



European
Water Partnership



"Aquawareness is an excellent and timely initiative, responding directly to the challenges highlighted in the Commission's Communication and its necessary follow-up with all stakeholders."

Stavros Dimas, EC Commissioner for the Environment



"In the name of the European Parliament I strongly welcome the initiatives that have been launched in this conference today: the European water vision for the twenty first century and the Aquawareness programme! Awareness of the current water situation in the Europe Union and its challenges, as well as a vision for the future of Europe's water, are crucial drivers in order to strive for a sustainable water management."



Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament

The high-level policy discussion set the scene on Europe's Water Vision for the 21st century, with contributions from Richard Seeber (MEP), Pekka Personen (Secretary-General COPA-COGECA), Tony Baynes (Director of Public Affairs Coca Cola HBC), Tony Long (Director WWF EPO), Sharon Nunes (Vice President Big Green Innovations IBM), Mitja Bricelj (State Secretary for Environment, Republic of Slovenia) and Peter Gammeltoft (Acting Director DG Environment, Directorate D, European Commission).

Mr. Vial (Deputy Water Director, France) and Mr. Victoria (Governor of World Water Council) closed the debate by providing the audience with the way forward during the French Presidency and the way ahead till the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009 respectively.



Launch of the European Water Vision for the 21st century and Aquawareness, 30th June 2008 European Parliament, Brussels



European
Water Partnership

Symbolically the European Water Vision was delivered, by the Chairman of the EWP Mr. Tom Vereijken to Mr. Janez Podobnik, Mr. Stavros Dimas and Mr. Richard Seeber, inside a glass bottle.



By dropping their thoughts, the 150 plus participants, from different backgrounds, made their contribution towards the development of a stronger and wider European Water Vision for the 21st century.



The European Water Vision will be further elaborated in a regional consultation process which will start in autumn 2008 collecting the local and regional perspective and experience with water challenges. Finally, after having gathered different views and opinions the European Water Vision incorporating the water stewardship principles will be presented globally and launched during the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009, as a European contribution to the forum and as a result from wide ranging regional consultations.

Within the European water awareness and water stewardship program, the different modules are currently being worked on, shaped and started to being realized with partners.

For further information on the project, the development and the possibilities of getting involved within the European Water Vision as well as within Aquawareness please check our homepage for regular updates.