

### **Aquawareness Policy Forum: Open dialogues and better communication needed**

Brussels, 23 March 2010. Yesterday the **Aquawareness Policy Forum “Water 2010 – who cares?”** took place in Brussels with more than 110 stakeholders coming together in Brussels to discuss which incentives, partnerships and change of mindsets Europe needs to achieve sustainable water management in Europe by 2030.

In interactive roundtable discussions representatives of the European Union Institutions – Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council Presidency – together with distinguished guests from business, industry, agriculture, civil society and regional organizations elaborated concrete action recommendations to reach the aims of the Water Vision for Europe. The Summit’s participants transmitted a clear message: Open dialogues including all stakeholders, more transparency in water management and improved communication of the European Institutions and Member states are needed to solve Europe’s water challenges.

The Aquawareness Policy Forum was officially opened by Mr. Gabor Spuller, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Saxony Anhalt, Germany, who stressed the need for “intelligent structures of water management, taking into account the geographical conditions and the broad public participation.” Mr. Tom Vereijken, Chairman of the European Water Partnership, welcomed the participants and focused attention on the need of multidisciplinary cooperation to face Europe’s water crises. Other speakers included Mr. Serge de Gheldere, Climate Ambassador to Al Gore, Ms. Maria Concepcion Garcia Gomez, Representative of the International Affairs Department, Director General for Water, Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs in Spain and Mr. Karl Falkenberg, Director General for the Environment. The opening speeches were followed by high level panel discussions, moderated by Frity Barth, Vice Chairman of the European Water Partnership and consisting of Ms. Lesha Witmer, Steering Committee Member of WfWP, Mr. Maria Concepcion Garcia Gomez, Mr. Karl Falkenberg, Mr. Eckhard Koch, Director Sustainability Center, BASF, Mr. Mathijs Mul, Youth Ambassador, Mr. Millan Millan, Director Center of Environmental Studies of the Mediterranean, Ms. Ania Grobicki, Executive Secretary GWP, Ms. Danuta Huebner, MEP, Ms. Evelyne Huytebroeck, Brussels Region Minister for Environment, Mr. Bart Devos, Youth Ambassador and Mr. Peter Gammeltoft, Head of Unit, DG Environment

A full report of the Aquawareness Policy Forum soon will be available on the EWP’s website.

#### Background:

Since the launch of the Water Vision for Europe several activities were pursued. Regional workshops throughout Europe gave insight into the priorities, challenges and solution Europe’s water is facing. These findings were globally presented during the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009. Based on a strategic policy review process, which has been initiated now in a multi stakeholder process to elaborate key actions needed to realize the aims of the Water Vision for Europe, this Forum provided the floor to debate and refine these recommendations with the new European

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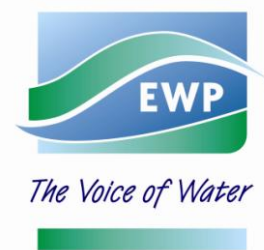
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# Press release

decision makers. A vision animation movie, visualizing the vision text, premiered during the summit.

The Aquawareness Policy Forum was part of the European Union Sustainable Energy Week and sponsored by the engineering consultancy Grontmij. The Forum took place within the premises of the Representation of the State of Saxony Anhalt to the EU.

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