

Document : **INPUT STATEMENT AQUAWARENESS POLICY FORUM**
Brussels, 22th March 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, allow me, on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, present apologies from Ms. Elena Espinosa, Minister for the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, Ms. Marta Morén, Water Director, Ms. Cristina Danés, Deputy Water Director, and Mr. Miguel Antolín, Head of International Affairs Department.

EWP's invitations to be present at the European Youth Water Summit and the Aquawareness Policy Forum have been very much welcome. Finally our Minister and Water Director's attendances have not been possible, since official duties do not allow them joining us.

Since it was launched by United Nations in 1992, many World Water Day events for awareness have been held around the world the 22th March. Today, commemorating the World Water Day give us the opportunity of sharing views on the aims of the Water Vision for Europe, which will contribute to raise stakeholder's awareness on water related issues.

Regarding the above mentioned Water Vision, let us point out that this Vision assimilates some of the basic key principles of the European Water Framework Directive (integrated approach, transparency and economic principles). Therefore stakeholder's endorsement of the Water Vision should contribute to a successful implementation of the WFD.

Synergies between successful implementation of the WFD and civil society's willingness of reaching sustainable water management will lead to better water administration; as a result, we would be able to achieve efficient water services and healthier watercourses.

The EWP 's Water Vision also mentions applying appropriate technologies, improving continuously water efficiency and minimizing pollution. These are tools that could help us in reaching the objectives set in the Water Framework Directive.

Climate change is also considered in the Water Vision for Europe. Coping with the challenges of climate change is not an easy task. In order to face up expected forthcoming droughts and floods events, when implementing EU policies on water, the view that adaptation measures should be taken into account in water management policies should not be forgotten.

The importance of taking into consideration climate change when talking about water is also recognized in other international fora, like the Midterm Review of the United Nations Decade of Action "Water for life" (2005-2015). A panel entitled "Water: Climate Change and Disasters" is programmed in the High Level Interactive Dialogue, taking place today in New York.

EWP's Water Vision for Europe goes beyond European borders, and projects a view of Europe as a responsible partner in the world, an example of European partnership in the water field is the European Water Initiative. EUWI was launched in 2002 and was conceived as a concerted effort by the European Commission, the EU Member States (MS), partner countries and civil society stakeholders to accelerate progress toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to water supply and sanitation within an integrated approach to water resources management.

Talking about active promotion of sustainable water supply and sanitation, we cannot forget the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM), to be approved at the Barcelona Ministerial Meeting (taking place 13th April 2010). SWM should constitute a framework for the work on the water field in the 43 countries integrating the UfM. The Strategy will focus on: enhancing effective governance for integrated water management, adapting to climate change, promoting water demand management and quality of water and biodiversity, and optimizing water financing and water valuation. These principles are related to those included in the EWP's Vision for Water in Europe.

We would like to stress that at all management levels (international, national and regional), and participation of public and private stakeholders, including civil society from all relevant sectors, even those outside "the water box", should be involved in water management in order to develop sustainable and efficient measures.

As public participation is key to a successful water policy, initiatives such as Aquawareness, integrating a multi-stakeholder approach to water planning and

management, could make a great contribution to developing and implementing water policies

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For sustainable water management to become a reality a hard job must be done. Public participation should encourage us in changing words into actions and in reaching sustainable water management, a challenge not only for policy makers, but also for all of us.

Thank you very much.