

Towards an EU Water Resilience Strategy



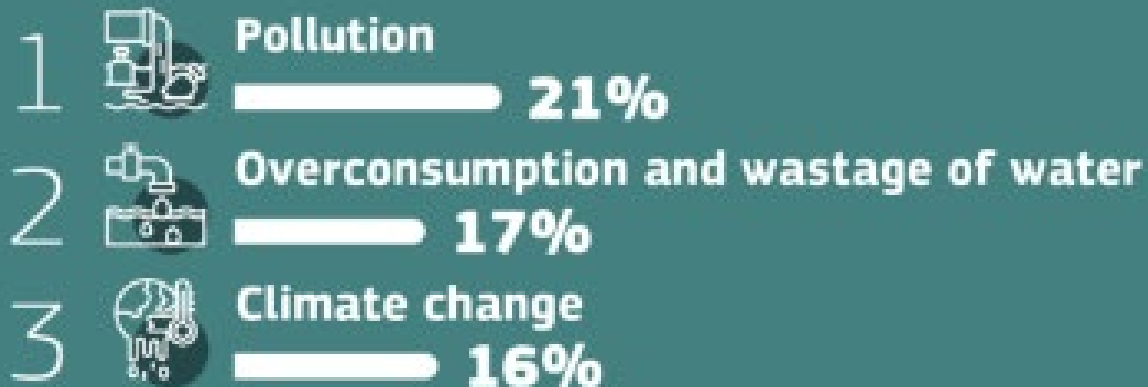
European Commission – Directorate General for the Environment

2024 Eurobarometer & WaterWiseEU campaign

Attitudes of Europeans towards the environment
- May 2024 - Eurobarometer survey

Perceptions on water-related issues

When asked about the **main threat related to water in their country**, citizens indicate:



See
Water
Differently

Strong online performance:
42m+ users reached online

78% support addition
EU measures to
address water problems in Europe



Status of Europe's water in 2021: Not meeting EU targets



37%
of **surface waters**
are in **good or better**
ecological status



29%
of **surface waters**
are in **good**
chemical status



91%
of **groundwater area**
is in **good**
quantitative status



77%
of **groundwater area**
is in **good**
chemical status

Climate change increases man-made pressures



Floods: 7.8 bn/year (river flooding) and 1.4 bn/year (coastal flooding)

Droughts: € 9 bn / year (but in extreme years like 2022 up to € 40 !)

Water Scarcity:
Occurs every year irrespective of droughts.
Water scarcity affects

29% of EU territory
34% of EU population

European Water Resilience Strategy

On 18 July 2024 Political Guidelines

*“The Water Resilience Strategy should **address water efficiency, water scarcity, pollution and water related risk**. It must enhance the competitive edge of Europe’s water industry, take a **circular** economy approach, and **digitalise** water management, cycles and utilities. It should help facilitate public and private **investment** in technology and cross-border water infrastructure, and strengthen EU global water leadership. “*





UN WATER CONFERENCE 2023

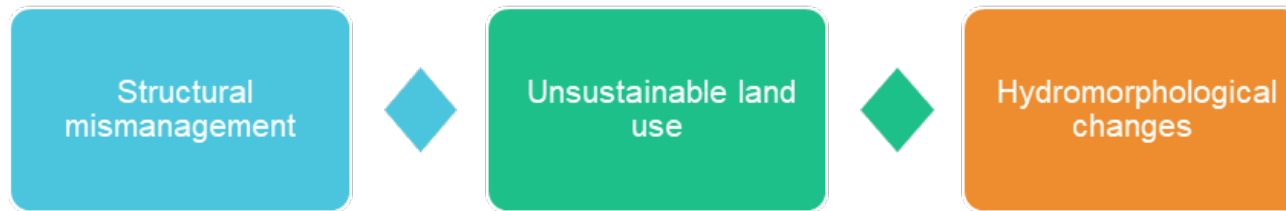
The EU vision for Water Resilience

*“In 2050, global society will be water resilient, offering water security for all. This entails the **protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, and a fair balance between water supply and water demand responding to current needs, including the realization of the human right to **safe drinking water and sanitation**, without compromising the rights of future generations.**”*

Key Message 1:

The water crisis is **NOT** the result of climate change **ONLY**

It is the result of :



The structural mismanagement is due to

- both legal and illegal **over-abstraction**
- **inefficiencies in water use and low water reuse** across sectors
- rampant **water pollution**
- **limited application** of fair water **pricing** and the **polluter pays principle**
- **lack of awareness** of water challenges
- **Insufficient investments**

This is exacerbated by accelerating climate change

Key Message 2:

See Water quality and quantity as two sides of the same coin

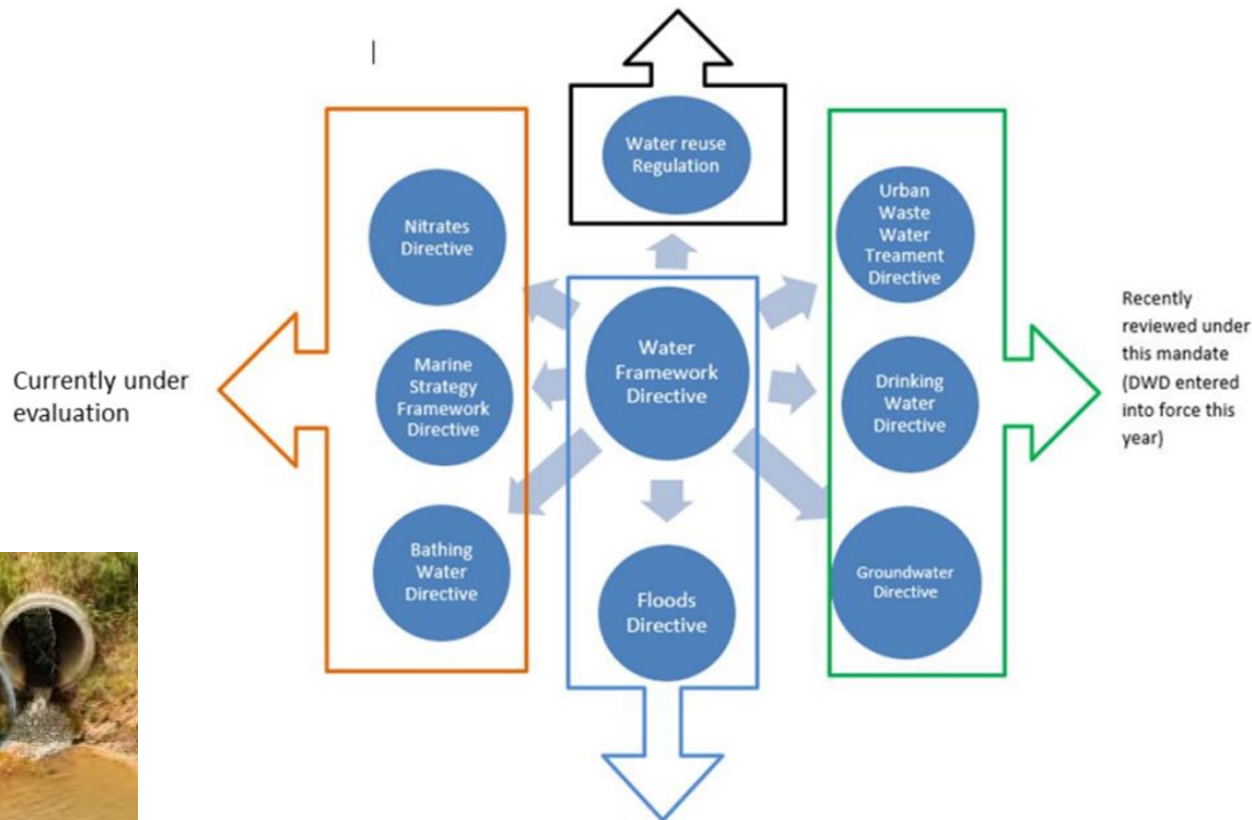


- The **more water is polluted**, the **less it is fit for use** and thus available for humans and the economy
- The **less water is available**, the **less pollution gets diluted**

Key Message 3:

We must implement and keep up to date the EU Water Acquis

In application in June 2023



Ongoing Assessment of the 3rd River Basin Management Plans and 2nd Flood Risk Management Plans

Commission will soon publish assessment

3rd River Basin Management plans, 2nd Flood Risk management Plan, Marine Strategy Framework Directive and FORENV = Input to Resilience Strategy

Commission Proposal for updating Priority Substances in WFD, EQS and GWD is pending adoption



Key Message 4:

We can significantly increase water saving and water efficiency

- Untapped water saving potentials:
 - Phasing out of coal and gas fired power plants
 - Water Reuse, Water Circularity and Rainwater Harvesting
 - More Drought Resistant Crops
- Untapped Water Efficiency Potentials:
 - Industry & Manufacturing; Leaks ; precision farming ; drip irrigation etc



Key Message 5:

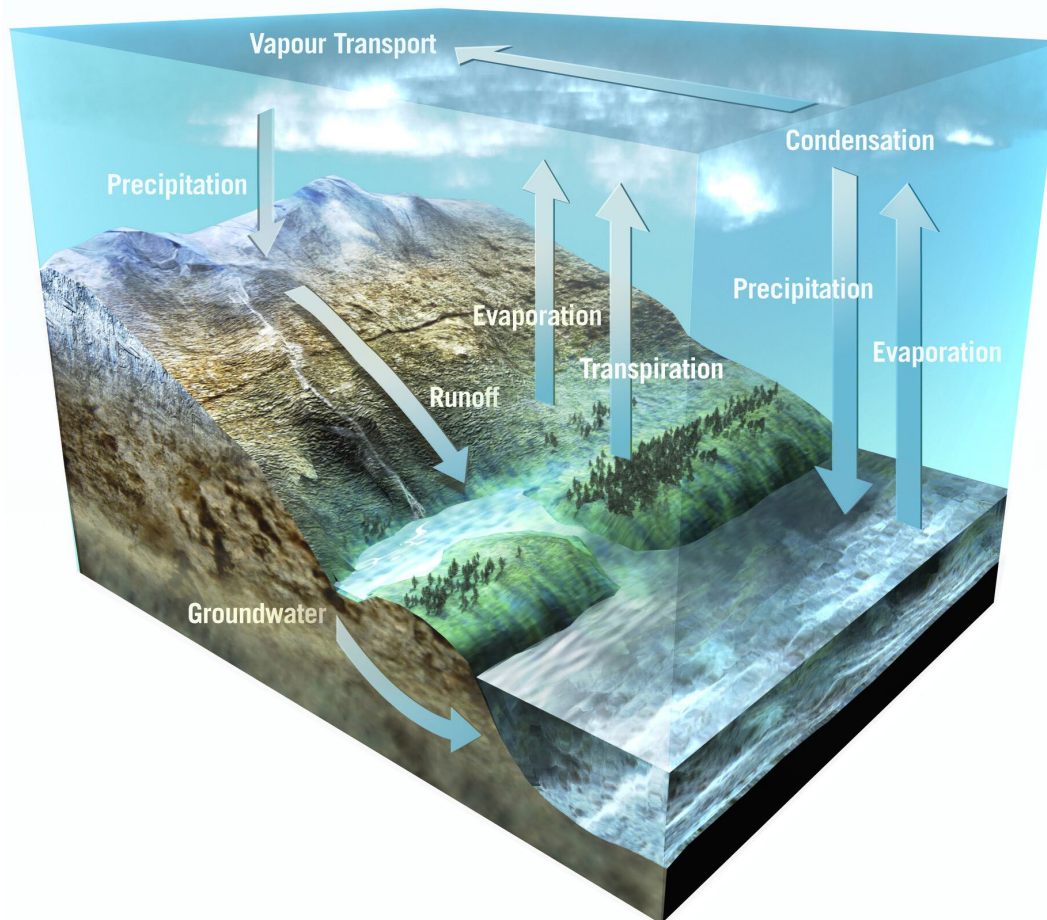
The Water – Food – Energy - Ecosystems Nexus is crucial

- The **Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus** : Interdependence of water, energy security, food security and ecosystems, including soil.
- **The production of food and energy requires water and healthy ecosystems.** The same goes for most of our industrial production and consumption commodities.
- This links with the **Draghi, Letta, Strohschneider** and **Wipac** reports.



Key Message 6:

Repair the broken water cycle through a Source to Sea approach



- Water and marine policy are intertwined – connect Water Resilience Strategy and Ocean Pact
- Evaluation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive will give further insights

Conclusions

- **Protect better what we have**
 - Fully Implement Secondary EU legislation on water quality
 - Adopt pending proposal for update of priority substances
- **Mainstream water resilience** in all sectors and plan ahead for emergencies (drought & flood risk management plans)
- **Maximise water saving and water efficiency** potential above increased water abstractions
- **Prioritise nature-based solutions** for water retention where feasible

Next Steps Water Resilience Strategy

- Publication of Assessments WFD, FD, MSFD early February
- **Call for Evidence** on WRS – early February
- **Stakeholder Event** 6 March 2025 (09:00-18:00) in Charlemagne Building (Commissioner Rosswal present, register via DG ENV website until 10 February)
- Water Resilience Strategy Communication to be adopted in 2025

Thank you

