

FROM THE EU BLUE DEAL AND WATER RESILIENCE STRATEGY TO GLOBAL WATER ACTION

EESC Contribution to the UN Water Conference 2026



Following the EESC's call, water has been recognised as a strategic priority in the EU, and a Water Resilience Strategy has been adopted.

Water plays a vital role in our society. It lies at the heart of the triple planetary crisis. However, we are far from achieving sustainable water management globally.

That is why the United Nations Water Conference 2026 is a fundamental moment to impact decision-making processes worldwide and foster collective responsibility. It is a wake-up call for global water action.

As an official advisory body representing organised civil society in Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has been at the forefront of driving water action in the EU. In 2023, we launched a [Call for an EU Blue Deal](#), proposing for the first time a comprehensive approach to water as a strategic, horizontal and standalone priority. Since then, water has been recognised as a strategic priority in the EU, and a stand-alone Water Resilience Strategy has been adopted.

We will now take our commitment to water to the global stage through our participation in the UN Water Conference. For that purpose, our Committee has adopted a dedicated opinion with concrete recommendations to make **water a strategic priority** also at an international level.

The way forward is clear: water is fundamental for societal resilience, climate adaptation and healthy ecosystems. Water and climate are mutually reinforcing but water resilience goes beyond climate and environmental policies; it requires an **alignment of all policies**.

The EESC contribution to the UN Water Conference calls for a paradigm shift worldwide, recognising water as a public good with social, environmental and economic value. It puts forward actions for the different interactive dialogues which can help accelerate progress in addressing the global water crisis, in all sectors of society.



Water for People

Access to water and sanitation is a fundamental human right.

The EESC considers that access to water and sanitation is a fundamental human right, and therefore access to safe drinking water must be an inalienable right for every individual.

In armed conflicts, water infrastructure has increasingly become a target, directly threatening this right. That is why the EESC calls for the international community to unequivocally condemn attacks against essential water infrastructure, which is indispensable to the survival of civilians, and recognise them as a war crime.

Furthermore, water must not be reduced to a commodity or purely financial asset, but **recognised by its social, environmental and economic value**. All national and international policies relevant to water management and governance should be guided by this principle.

The EESC reiterates its call in the EU Blue Deal for a unified approach to water poverty, advocating guidelines to monitor access to quality and affordable water and sanitation services with options, impact and risk assessment, and evaluation throughout their lifespan.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services require more support through integrated climate-resilient approaches combining infrastructure development, governance and capacity building, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised communities. In the event of conflicts over water use, priority should be given to drinking water supply.



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