Cities and Water Conference
Leeuwarden - February 11, 2016

Urban Water Agenda 2030

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European cities convene in Leeuwarden to discuss urban priorities in relation to water. There is growing understanding among decision-makers in European cities and regions that water is as important for cities as energy or climate, and there are risks and opportunities related to water that will affect the economic development and prosperity of European cities in the future.

The World Economic Forum concluded recently that "global water crises – from drought in the world's most productive farmlands to the hundreds of millions of people without access to safe drinking water – are the biggest threats facing the planet over the next decade[1]". The European Environment Agency set out the risks related to water in Europe. Water scarcity is already a serious problem for many regions of Europe with some 45% of European territory expected to be facing water scarcity problems by 2030. On the other hand, the damage caused by floods may increase five-fold by 2050[2]. While the quality of European waters has improved over recent decades the EEA concludes that "nutrients, pesticides, industrial chemicals, and household chemicals continue to affect the quality of surface, ground and marine waters. This threatens aquatic ecosystems and raises concern about potential human health impacts"[3].

The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and Mayors Adapt are initiatives of urban leaders who decided that cities would play a leading role in addressing the energy and climate change challenge and achieving the objectives of EU climate and energy policy. These two initiatives triggered actions by cities that have a huge positive impact and contribute to the transition towards an energy efficient, low carbon and climate resilient society.

Similar leadership is needed if cities are to address water challenges and exploit opportunities for smart and sustainable urban water management that brings urban development, economic and environmental benefits, and ultimately improves the quality of life of the urban population. Such water management should make cities more resilient to the future risks related to water such as water scarcity, water pollution and floods. Simultaneously cities could benefit from the opportunities provided by water efficiency, application of the circular economy concept to water including the reuse of urban wastewater and green urban infrastructure. By promptly adopting better urban water management cities assume a leading role in improving the quantitative and qualitative status of European waters, the key objective of European Union water policy.

To address these risks and opportunities the participants in the Cities & Water Conference – mayors, urban water managers, urban water service providers and water innovators –develop building blocks of a new urban water agenda. This agenda identifies important water issues for cities, sets objectives for 2030 and proposes concrete actions to achieve these objectives.

An urban water agenda cannot be defined in isolation from broader management of water resources in Europe's river basins. Water use in cities is intrinsically linked to the way how water resources are managed and used by other users – those downstream depend on those upstream, quality of water for cities is affected by pollution from agriculture and industry, and

[1] http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/01/why-world-water-crises-are-a-top-global-risk/
[2] http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/floodplain-management-reducing-flood-risks
[3] http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2015/synthesis/report/5-riskstohealth

the most efficient flood prevention is based on improving water retention in soil in the whole watershed. This is why the new urban water agenda has two components: commitments and actions on the issues over which cities have control and where they can act independently of other actors; and calls upon other stakeholders to cooperate on issues on which cities and stakeholders have to act together for mutual benefits.

Commitment	Target 2030	Call upon stakeholders
Water efficiency – to reduce water abstraction to the level of sustainable use and good ecological status of water bodies		
Cities will continue to reduce leakage in the water distribution system	Maximum 10% of water losses	
Cities will continue to reduce water consumption	Reduction by 20% compared to 2015	Farmers should reduce abstraction for irrigation by increasing efficiency of irrigation systems Industry should apply water efficient production processes and technologies
Cities will promote and enable the reuse of urban wastewater	50% of urban water use for non-drinking water should come from reused water	Farmers should increase the use of treated urban wastewater for irrigation Industry should recycle water within industrial processes
Energy and resource efficiency of urban water systems		
Cities will reduce the energy consumption related to water production, distribution, use and treatment	Reduction by 50% compared to 2015	
Cities will recover nutrients and organic matter from wastewater and return them to agriculture/ other uses	Recovery of 75% nutrients, 50% organic matter	Farmers should increase the use of nutrients and organic matter recovered from urban wastewater
Water quality – to ensure the quality of water for urban use, prevent pollution of water by cities		
Cities will ensure delivery of safe drinking water to all inhabitants including safe distribution networks		
Cities will ensure adequate treatment of their wastewater to contribute to the achievement of the good chemical status of water bodies		Farmers should adopt sustainable practices to reduce pollution of water sources by nutrients and pesticides Industry should reduce pollution of their discharges
Cities will ensure adequate treatment of storm and runoff water to prevent pollution of water bodies		
Cities will prevent pollution by emerging pollutants in urban wastewater		
Sustainability of urban water infrastructure		
Cities will set water prices that will enable long term investment in and maintenance of their water infrastructure and provide incentive		

for more efficient use of water		
Cities will design, build and maintain their water infrastructure in the way that will ensure long term functional operation and compliance with future environmental requirements		
Flood prevention and nature based solutions		
Cities will apply land use planning practices that reduce flood risk and will promote flood risk awareness		
Cities will reduce runoff of rain water by increasing infiltration on their territories	Reduction of storm water overflows by 50%, compared to 5-year average prior to 2015	Farmers and forest managers should adopt practices that increase natural water retention of soil Land use/management and river basin authorities should adopt policies that promote natural water retention
Cities will promote green infrastructure and storage of rainwater (for reuse) to increase water retention on their territories and reduce heat island effects		

The city of Leeuwarden, the host of the Cities & Water conference, looks forward to working closely together with other European cities that are willing to take the next step in urban water management and apply the urban water agenda. Leeuwarden is willing to form a group of leading cities to develop and refine further the commitments and targets and mobilise resources for their implementation. These resources may include information and guidance on best practices and innovative solutions, access to funding and support at European level, and coordination with other initiatives and policy processes.

European cities are invited to join the initiative and subscribe to the urban water agenda. Members of this initiative are committed to:

- Cooperation including sharing information about existing initiatives and good practices
- Establishing a strategic research agenda on urban water innovation backed up by an implementation plan
- Integrating the commitments and targets of the urban water agenda into the EU urban agenda and in the EU regional and urban policy.
- Collaborate with the Covenant of Mayors and Mayors Adapt with a view to integrating the urban water agenda into these initiatives.

Any feed back on this draft agenda is welcome at: Pieter.deJong@wetsus.nl

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European Commission

Gemeente Leeuwarden

WATER CAMPUS Leeuwarden