

Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on World and European Water Day, 22 March 2017

Safe drinking water and sanitation are crucial for a healthy and dignified life. Yet, 663 million people, 1 out of 10 people in the world, still lack access to safe water and are deprived of a basic human right. The world has also fallen short of the sanitation target, leaving still 2.4 billion people, 1 out of 3 people, without access to adequate sanitation facilities. The persistence of water scarcity and water stress, given climate change and demographic developments, are likely to affect more and more people in the future.

On the occasion of World Water Day, as European Union we reiterate our commitment, through Agenda 2030, to achieve access and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, in particular to the most vulnerable groups. Our commitment to leaving no-one behind means that no-one should be deprived of access to clean water. We also reiterate our commitment to the Paris Agreement and the Marrakech Action Proclamation which reaffirmed the world's determination to fight climate change and to help address the impacts of climate change, including on water.

Safe drinking water and sanitation are basic services. They are pre-requisites for health, growth and productivity. In addition to the bilateral cooperation from the EU Member States, the European Union has provided more than 2.2 billion Euro to water and sanitation projects in more than 62 countries worldwide since 2007. In response to the rise in humanitarian needs and forced displacement, the EU is determined to continue supporting people affected by natural and man-made disasters, by providing life-saving access to safe and clean water.

The EU will also continue to support sustainable water management through a strategic approach to regional development on the basis of the 2013 Water Diplomacy Council Conclusions, by promoting transboundary cooperation management throughout the world which is crucial for development as well as for stability, resilience, peace and security. In this context, special attention must be given to the critical inter-linkages between water, energy and food security. The EU also promotes adherence to international agreements on water cooperation, particularly the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes as well as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of international Watercourses. Water is the source of life, life we have the duty to protect everywhere in the world.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this Declaration.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

This declaration is issued on the occasion of the World and European Water day (22 March 2017).

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