



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate C – Zero Pollution
ENV.C.1 – Sustainable Freshwater Management

Brussels
ENV.C.1/LR

Dear Ms Baffert,

Thank you for your letter of 5 March 2024 on behalf of WWF Europe as well as Aggregates Europe – UEPG, Agroecology Europe, Bird Life Europe and Central Asia, Buglife, CEEweb for Biodiversity, ClientEarth, Climate Alliance, Comité National de la Conchyliculture, EUROPARC, European Anglers Alliance, European Environmental Bureau, European Public Service Union, European Rivers Network, European Water Movement, Eurosite, Greenpeace, ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, European Secretariat, IFOAM - Organics Europe, International Mire Conservation Group, Mammal Conservation Europe, Natural Mineral Waters Europe, PAN Europe, Reptile Amphibian Conservation Europe, Societas Europaea Herpetologica, Surfrider Foundation Europe, The Nature Conservancy, Wetlands International Europe.

President von der Leyen has asked me to reply on her behalf.

We thank you very much for sharing these sectors' strong views on the importance of a solid water resilience policy at European Union level.

As expressed often by Commissioner Sinkevičius, we share your views on the strategic importance of making Europe's waters more resilient by acting on anthropogenic pressures.

Your letter underlines that all Europeans should be ensured of their basic right to clean and healthy water. This is a key concern for the European Commission too. We also agree that water resilience can to a large extent be achieved through nature-based solutions. We take good note of your call for biodiversity and nature-based solutions to become a priority also in the next Commission's mandate. Healthy freshwater and marine ecosystems - rivers, lakes, wetlands, deltas and coastal areas – are indeed the bedrock of a sound economy and healthy population, and indispensable for nature as a precious common good that must be preserved for generations to come.

Ms. Claire Baffert,

WWF Europe

By email: cbaffert@wwf.eu

The recently adopted Communication on managing climate risks to protect people and prosperity underscores that more needs to be done to consider climate-related impacts in disaster risk assessments. This complex policy needs to be built gradually. For that reason, considering the fundamental role that water plays in sustaining life and as an economic resource, the Commission has decided to take the necessary time to comprehensively map relevant issues across the EU to better consider future action for water resilience, with a ‘source to sea’ approach firmly in mind.

The Commission is taking stock of the issues and building upon the findings of the ongoing assessments of the Member States’ updated River Basin and Flood Risk Management Plans and marine Programmes of Measures. On that basis, it will consider the need for further action.

Let me also mention that the upcoming European Green Week Conference, on 29-30 May, will focus on water resilience: on that occasion, an EU-wide awareness campaign on the subject will officially be launched in close partnership with the Member States and all interested stakeholders.

Thus, the time ahead is crucial, from a European Commission perspective, to benefit from the ongoing public debate and the many inputs being developed by other EU institutions, Member States, and stakeholders.

Rest assured that the European Commission is committed to continue working with all interested stakeholders, including each of the signatories to the letter of last March 5th, on delivering on the 2050 Water Resilience vision presented by the EU at the UN Water Conference in March 2023.

Yours sincerely,

Claudia OLAZABAL
Head of Unit

cc. Veronica MANFREDI