



To:

Ms Jessika Roswall
European Commissioner for Environment, Water
Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1040 Brussels

Cc:

Ms Teresa Ribera,
Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and
Competitive Transition

Mr Stéphane Séjourné,
Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and
Industrial Strategy

Mr Christophe Hansen,
European Commissioner for Agriculture and Food

Brussels, 1 April 2026

Subject: Europe's economy depends on water quality: the need for a thorough economic assessment of the Water Framework Directive revision

Dear Commissioner Roswall,

The undersigned organisations represent several sectors that rely on raw water to provide products and services (including services of general interest) that are essential both to citizens' daily lives and to other economic activities. These sectors include drinking water services, food production, beverages and other water-dependent activities.

By the very nature of their operations, these sectors are inherently European: they depend directly on the water bodies of our continent and generate turnover that is largely reinvested in the European economy through infrastructure development, innovation, and stable employment, thereby contributing to local economic development.

The recently published Call for Evidence for an impact assessment on a targeted revision of the Water Framework Directive highlights the need to "address potential bottlenecks" in the current legislation in order to facilitate access to critical raw materials, in line with the ResourceEU strategy.

We support the EU's broader policy priorities aimed at strengthening European competitiveness and reinforcing strategic autonomy in key supply chains, including for critical raw materials. We also welcome the emphasis in the Call for Evidence that the revision will not compromise the

protection of the environment and human health, and that the specific economic, social, and environmental impacts will be duly identified. In this context, we call on the Commission to carefully consider the potential consequences for water-dependent economic sectors arising from any changes to the current legal framework.

In particular, in carrying out the forthcoming impact assessment, the unintended operational and economic consequences—along with their cascading effects—of weakening quality objectives or protection principles across a broad range of sectors and uses should be thoroughly evaluated:

- For drinking water providers and food and beverage producers, lower raw water quality would translate into higher treatment costs, which will be ultimately passed on to consumers and users of water services, including businesses (especially SMEs and services of general interest), potentially exacerbating inflationary trends.
- In cases where additional treatment is legally prohibited, technically unfeasible or economically disproportionate, declining water quality could lead to the closure of specific activities or the abandonment of certain water sources. This will cause a reduction of the overall water availability and increasing tensions among different users and/or sectors (including essential services) for access to the resource
- For aquaculture and other food production, which are particularly sensitive to water quality and ecosystem conditions, deterioration directly reduces productivity and marketability, affecting rural and coastal employment as well as, potentially, the resilience of the whole food supply chain.

The recently adopted European Water Resilience Strategy (EWRS) highlights the vital link between water resilience and economic competitiveness, explicitly stating that achieving water resilience will depend on the effective implementation of the EU's comprehensive water acquis. We fully support this approach and would like to stress that regulatory stability is a key condition for enabling long-term investments and attracting capital. Water infrastructure, production facilities, and nature-based solutions require planning horizons that often span several decades, making predictable and stable regulatory frameworks essential for their successful deployment.

While the undersigned organisations will respond individually to the Call for Evidence and provide detailed input on the potential impact of the revision on their respective sectors, we jointly call on the Commission to carefully consider the systemic effects on the broader economy of any changes to the non-deterioration principle when preparing the impact assessment and related guidance.

A robust and stable water framework is not only an environmental safeguard but also a structural condition for significant parts of the European economy to thrive, invest, and contribute to the Union's competitiveness and strategic autonomy.

We remain at your disposal for further dialogue and stand ready to contribute constructively to discussions on how to enhance implementation while safeguarding the foundations of Europe's water resilience.

Yours sincerely,



The European association of public water operators



EurEau

European Water Services



European Mollusc Producers' Association



European Water Association



International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube Region

International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube Region



Natural Mineral Waters Europe



SGI Europe



Union of European Soft Drinks Associations