



# Antwerp Dialogue on Water – An opportunity for European Competitiveness

Brussels, 3 February 2025

*The Antwerp Dialogue on EU Water Resilience Strategy – An opportunity for European competitiveness brought together industry stakeholders and policymakers to discuss how future European policy can ensure that the importance of water management is recognised, safeguarded and even accelerated.*

This meeting was hosted by Antwerp Declaration signatories, Water Europe and Ecolab. The main conclusions are:

1. **Water is a Finite, Local and Shared Resource:** Water is essential for every industrial process, and we do not have a limitless supply. It must be managed wisely, which can mean different things in different locations. EU-wide legislation has a critical role to play in recognising the importance of water for all industries. *The water dimension should be integrated into all EU policies so that sustainable water use (e.g. water reuse and cascading) is woven into the fabric of the EU's sustainable competitiveness goals.*
2. **Water has a Crucial Role in EU Competitiveness and Decarbonisation:** Our common objective is clear: to produce more with less – more industrial output with less water, energy, waste and lower emissions – without compromising the principles of reliable production. *The water-energy-productivity nexus must be recognised to achieve a truly water-smart economy in a resilient Europe.*
3. **Technology and Data are Imperatives for making the EU Water Resilient:** Innovation is needed to achieve the robust data on sustainable water use. The data will in turn drive breakthrough innovations in water saving or enabling technologies that we still need. The one flows from the other. *Policies on water should promote the accelerated adoption of existing technologies as well as drive and scale innovation to achieve water security.*
4. **Timely Investment and Funding Mechanisms will Accelerate Progress:** Both public and private investments will be necessary to ensure the transition towards a water-smart economy. *The Water Resilience Strategy (and Action Plan) should specifically facilitate investment by incentivising water materiality and include dedicated water funds in the next MFF.*
5. **Maximise the Circularity of Water to Strengthen the EU's Strategic Autonomy:** Solutions which support resource recovery from urban, industrial and agricultural wastewater flows will boost our autonomy for critical materials. *The Water Resilience Strategy should support water mining activities by facilitating circular processes based on quality instead of origin.*

## CONCLUSIONS

6. **Drive Cooperation and Public-Private-Partnerships between Relevant Stakeholders (including local authorities and policy makers):** Achieving a water-smart economy requires cooperation among all stakeholders in the water value chain to ensure coherence. *Cooperation should not be hampered by restrictive policy that does not encompass a holistic approach to true water resilience.*

## Endorsing Organisations

