

Ioannis Katsogiannis, Director of the Institute of Sustainable Water Management and Water Law of the European Public Law Organization

Email: ikatsogiannis@eplo.int

Statement by the European Public Law Organization (EPLO) to the UN water conference 2023.

Dear Excellencies, Dear colleagues,

The European Public Law Organization was established in 2007 in Athens and to this date, it has developed, organized, promoted and supported more than 200 educational, research, training, institution building and other activities and has provided assistance to democratic institutions in more than 70 countries.

In order to accomplish its purposes, the EPLO promotes the cooperation with other institutions, organizations and bodies in particular within the United Nations system. The EPLO has been granted the Observer Status at the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Because of the importance and the critical status of the global water situation, EPLO has found the Institute of Sustainable Water Management and Water Law, in order to emphasize and contribute to the finding and implementing of solutions to the global water crisis.

The **Institute of sustainable water management and law of water** is serving as a think tank and project leader on issues relevant to the water management and law, aiming at offering support to governments and organizations in realizing the best practices for sustainable water management and identifying or creating the proper legal framework for ensuring appropriate and sustainable water use and distribution.

The Institute intends also to support the governments in realizing the objectives of the Zero Pollution Action Plan through engagement with all stakeholders concerned. This will be achieved, by bringing focus on preventing or reducing water pollution and how this can be part of an integrated and holistic approach to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal in the most efficient and effective way.

In our opinion three are the major problems, regarding the water situation today globally. First, there are still millions of people not having access to safe drinking water and billions of people not having access to improved sanitation. We are still far away of achieving the SDG 6 and this means that further actions should be taken, which will be based on the up to now gained experience and will be designed in such a way that will be more efficient and tailored to the needs of each of the affected counties and populations.

However, at the same time, water scarcity is affecting also countries, which have improved infrastructure and have solved problems with water supply and sanitation. Water scarcity will affect very soon whole societies and might cause whole countries

to be abandoned. Need for actions is urgent. Water reuse should be implemented much faster within Europe and globally. Still, there are countries that have not yet started employing the appropriate technologies for achieving the legislative limits for water reuse either for agriculture or for groundwater recharge.

And furthermore, water pollution is still a big problem and threatens among other the biodiversity. According to the interim monitoring report of the Zero Pollution Action plan of the European Commission, still a big percentage of European ground and surface waters do not have good chemical condition. Pollution by microplastics and persistent organic pollutants such as PFAS is still of growing concern.

Therefore, it is the view of the European Public Law organization, that the further actions should be centrally coordinated, so that holistic global solutions will be provided in the next years up to 2050. The United Nations water program could certainly be the ideal platform for taking this role and bringing results that can save the world from a huge disaster, caused by water shortages.

The European Public Law Organization is willing to contribute to the future actions organized by the United Nations and offers its highly specialized personnel for the assistance in accomplishing the targets that have been set. We need to act now, we need to do it consistently and we must do it all together.

Thank you very much for your attention.