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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(24.9.2024)

1. In her recently published 2024-2029 Political Guidelines¹, the President of the Commission has announced that the next Commission intends to adopt a European Water Resilience Strategy to ensure that water is properly managed, scarcity reduced, and the competitive edge of Europe's water industry strengthened also using a circular economy approach. The adoption date of the Strategy will be determined once the new Commission is in place.

2. It is very important for Member States to close their investment gaps by using existing European funds to the fullest extent. The current Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027² already provides for various possibilities to financially support improvements of water management and innovation in the water sector (through the European Regional Development Fund³, the Recovery and Resilience Fund⁴, Horizon Europe⁵, the EU programme for the environment and climate action⁶ etc). Moreover, the Common Agricultural Policy for 2023-2027⁷ funds more efficient irrigation, supports nature-based solutions and organic farming. In case of natural disasters or health emergencies, Member States may also seek support from the EU Solidarity Fund⁸.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/president-elect-ursula-von-der-leyen_en

² https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/2021-2027_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

⁵ For instance, ongoing Horizon Europe programmes regarding water resilience include 'the Water4All Partnership' (<https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/>), the Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area – PRIMA (<https://prima-med.org/>), the EU missions 'A Soil Deal for Europe' (https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/soil-deal-europe_en), 'Restore our Ocean and Waters' (https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en) and 'Adaptation to Climate Change' (https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/adaptation-climate-change_en).

⁶ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en

⁷ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-2023-27_en

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/solidarity-fund_en