

## BRUGES DECLARATION

### On stakeholder participation in regional and local water management

**EUWMA**, the European Union of Water Management Associations, representing public local and regional water management organizations from, currently, nine EU member states (Belgium, Italy, Hungary, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom and the Netherlands) covering a surface of around 55 million hectares.

#### **EUWMA members are:**

- Public entities, involving stakeholders with an interest in water management, performing their tasks operationally autonomous, under varying degrees of administrative supervision;
- Authorized by national law to perform water management tasks, including water supply, waste water treatment and discharge, flood, water scarcity, droughts and coastal protection, water quality management, drainage regulation and irrigation – integrating protection of the environment, biodiversity and wetlands;
- Based on public participation and thereby contribute to more effective collaboration and design in sustainable water management.

#### **EUWMA emphasizes that:**

- European legislation obliges Member States to provide for appropriate competent authorities and administrative arrangements for river basin management;
- Implementation of EU water legislation can only be successful if water is managed on a catchment approach. Water managers can offer best practice as their associations are historically based on catchment responsibility;
- Local and Regional Water Managers must directly be involved by Member States' competent authorities in coming up with the solutions to water related problems so the solutions can be tailored to local conditions, rather than a “one size fits all approach” often favored by Member States' government departments;
- Sufficient financing for local water management is crucial for the continuation of local river basin management. Local water managers require financial strength in

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order to fulfill their tasks and overcome problems successfully. Future challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, droughts and floods resilience require extra care and therefore also adequate funding.

**EUWMA asks the national governments to:**

- Implement EU legislation through regional management both for water, land use and agriculture in respect to the EU principles of multi level government participation (for example farmers, land owners, inhabitants) and the governance requirement under the Horizon 2020 process<sup>1</sup>;
- Create, if not yet present, legal possibilities for water management associations to co-finance investments (for example in self financed projects by farmers, land owners and inhabitants) and maintenance in regional water management;
- Actively involve regional and local water managers in the policy making process as they implement policy.

Bruges, 2-3 September 2013,

Jef van Looy, president

Erik Kraaij, secretary general

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<sup>1</sup> See EUWMA's Cambridge declaration (2011)

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