

17th EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT FOR WATER



France & Germany, Strasbourg & Freiburg - September 2026

Common Commitment Statement

For a sustainable future: the 17th EYPW young people's commitments to water and transboundary cooperation.

We, the participants of the 17th European Youth Parliament for Water, having met in Strasbourg and Freiburg from September 20 to 26, 2026, recognize the crucial importance of water and transboundary cooperation to ensure peaceful futures. As we will inherit the consequences of today's decisions, we are determined to play a part in shaping this future. Based on our shared vision of current challenges and future paths for Europe's water, we set out our commitments to fostering young people's active presence and the long-term sustainability of the water sector. We believe these principles must be adapted both to local contexts and transboundary uses of water, recognizing the unique needs and opportunities that each situation requires. We acknowledge that rivers hold an intrinsic cultural and emotional identity that is detached from territories and borders, connecting communities, ecosystems and people across boundaries.

We have agreed, following a unanimous vote, that this shared understanding of water will guide our actions through the **5 pillars** set out in this declaration:

1. Meaningful youth-led action

We recognize our responsibility as the 17th EYPW to pave the way for **continuous and meaningful youth-led action in the water sector**. We aim to use our network, knowledge, and visibility to connect and support youth initiatives across the continent; particularly those with fewer opportunities to access European and international institutions.

In a world increasingly afflicted by climate change, today's youth will inherit decisions made by policymakers and governments. We believe that in light of this, it is only fair that we should be part of the decisionmaking discussions in an exercise of true democracy. We recognize that inclusive and effective policy is enhanced with active, democratic and long-term participation and feedback of youth. This diversity equates to resilience. We also wish to foster collaboration between various youth organizations and external partners, in order to provide a representative understanding of the youth's perspective on current transboundary water governance.

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2. Environmental and climate protection, Nature restoration and Resilience

We recognize **environmental protection and nature restoration are key components to building resilient water systems and adapting to a changing climate**. We advocate for restoration approaches that strengthen ecosystem functions, biodiversity, water quality and quantity, and the ecosystem services that communities depend on. Rather than seeking to recreate historical conditions that may no longer be achievable or appropriate, we aim to support ecosystems that are functional and resilient under current and future conditions while responding to societal needs. We will promote nature-based solutions and the restoration of natural processes, connectivity, and habitats, and encourage these efforts to be connected and scaled through basin-wide and transboundary cooperation. advocates and decision-makers in society.

We acknowledge the increasing pressure on freshwater resources is instigated by industrial practices, AI, carbon-heavy value chains, and water-heavy agricultural practices. We recognize the significance of water management and rigorous environmental measures. Promoting the efficient use of water, along with standards for the treatment and discharge of water resources, are key tools towards protecting the environment.

3. Transboundary Water Governance

We recognize that **water governance can lead to the mismanagement of transboundary water resources and adverse effects on people, the environment and industry**. We recognize that there needs to be better alignment between policies and legislations among riparian countries; as well as the respective local implementation and water governance practices, while respecting human rights, environmental protection and the peaceful distribution of water resources. At the same time, wider policies should not override local needs. Each territory faces different challenges and should retain the flexibility to adapt implementation to its specific context. We aim to bridge local action with broader water policy and decision-making through regular communication with local actors, ensuring that local experiences inform larger-scale decisions and that efforts remain connected as they grow.

In this way, youth-led water action can extend beyond individual projects or mandates, building continuity, cooperation and long-term impact.

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4. Awareness Raising

We are committed to **raising awareness and water consciousness among young people and local communities**. This includes providing accessible information about current and future challenges, water availability and use, environmental impacts of industry, pollution, climate change, and other emerging water-related cross-sectoral issues, as well as ongoing and planned water projects and funding opportunities. By improving awareness and access to knowledge, we aim to equip young people with the information they need to engage meaningfully in discussions, contribute their perspectives, and incite the youth to embrace their civic duties and take informed action on the water challenges of today and tomorrow.

5. Education and Capacity building

We believe that **strengthening knowledge and skills is essential for building a resilient and collaborative water sector**. We aim to foster continuous learning and professional development for European youth, through training programmes, workshops or webinars, technical exchanges, and interdisciplinary knowledge-sharing opportunities. Our objective is to empower young professionals, students, researchers, and practitioners across the water sector with the competencies needed to address complex transboundary water challenges, bridge the gap between science and policy, and promote innovative and evidence-based solutions. By investing in capacity building, we contribute to a stronger, more connected, and future-ready water community capable of protecting and managing our water resources.

United for water,

Participating members of the 17th European Youth Parliament for Water



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