



# The Model Conference Global Environmental Issues

Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics in Bratislava



## Modelová konferencia Environmentálna sekcia

Fakulta medzinárodných vzťahov, Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave

The European Union (hitherto referred to as the EU) would like to thank the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century for its interest in contemporary environmental issues. The EU would like to stress that it is in its best interest to find solutions to the problems described in the draft and after their in-depth analysis would like to present its position and proposals for consideration:

- ✿ The EU is particularly aware of the fact that water is vital for human beings and necessary for many industries, especially for agriculture, therefore, it takes many initiatives to protect water resources and to assure that their use, distribution and management are efficient enough. This can be proved by a number of documents issued at the European level which aim at solving problems related to water scarcity, access to water and droughts, namely the Water Framework Directive, a Commission Communication on Water scarcity, etc. and a Blueprint for Safeguarding Europe's Water is going to be published in 2012.
- ✿ Water demand management being given the primary role in the EU's perspective on water, the EU is convinced that the potential for water savings and efficiency should be considered first and only then, if all possible options are taken into account, additional water supply infrastructures can be discussed.
- ✿ According to the EU it is the implementation of the effective pricing policy which is crucial if water is to be used efficiently and treated with care. Thus, the EU is a proponent of imposing the "user (consumer) pays" principle in order to well manage the demand for water and to avoid water wastage. However, this objective also requires a deep expertise of the conditions of existing pipes, whose leakages can reportedly reach up to 50% in urban systems. In this regard the EU sees identifying the places where the most significant leakages occur as a necessary step to be taken. This expertise should be accompanied by correct and precise measurements of water consumption and of water facilities capacity.
- ✿ However, the EU deeply realises that its approaches cannot be fully and identically applied in those developing and least developed countries in which primarily sufficient access to water must be ensured, for example in Sudan (both Republic of Sudan and South Sudan) and in Somalia where this problem largely contributes to the political instability in the region and the other way around (due to political instability, sufficient water infrastructure was not built) and it also leads to mass migration (some families are said to migrate more than 200 km in search of water). In this regard, the EU agrees with the proposition to create a fund which would support the local non-governmental organisations (hitherto referred to as NGOs) and private sector subjects. However, a sufficient controlling body should be established in order to monitor the use of the resources and to avoid frauds.



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- ✿ Moreover, the EU does not exclude the possibility of co-financing certain projects on the basis of PPP projects. This statement touches especially on the states whose political situation can be considered stable and whose government authorities are capable of facilitating the transfer of technology to the private sector and encouraging the development of local water supply and wastewater disposal. Furthermore, the EU has already gained some experience in funding similar projects (from its funds) up to 75% on average of all the project costs.
- ✿ The EU would also like to underline that it has already devoted significant financial resources to help many developing and least developed countries (hitherto referred to as the LDCs) and it intends to continue in these initiatives. Given its traditional economic ties with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the EU turns its attention to difficulties that these countries have to face. Therefore, the ACP-EU Water Facility was launched with the objective of co-financing water and basic sanitation infrastructure to the poor, and to improve water management and projects. So far, the EU has supported 175 projects with € 497 million within the framework of the First Water Initiative and the Second Water Initiative presented in February 2010 anticipates the additional funding to be about € 200 million.
- ✿ It is also noteworthy to say that this EU initiative is principally aimed at helping to achieve the 7<sup>th</sup> Millennium Development Goal related to water and sanitation, namely “to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation“. In fact, achieving this goal is also a key prerequisite for two other targets, namely reducing child and maternal mortality and combating diseases which are spread very easily due to impure water.
- ✿ Referring to the proposal of equal distribution of seats and votes in the committee and the financial participation in the fund, the EU proposes that slightly different conditions are applied to integration organizations taking part in the committee, for example the EU would like to be represented by its EU officials but to have as many votes as would be attributed to its 27 member states as if they were represented individually. In terms of the financial support to the committee proposed to be amounting to 2% of the countries' GDP, the EU considers this percentage to be too high for developing countries and it may discourage them from participating. Therefore, it proposes to lower this percentage to 0,8% GDP. The EU also suggests that a certain minimum amount of financial resources being pooled by such international organizations should be defined, for example € 200 million. The EU agrees with the establishment of a consultative organ comprised of the LDCs though.



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- ✿ In case the aforementioned proposal concerning pooling the financial resources of the EU were accepted, the EU would require the newly established committee to evaluate the proposed projects in accordance with the criteria which are normally taken into account by the EU's ACP-EU Water Facility Unit. As a matter of fact, the assessment of proposed projects is done very carefully the most important criteria being innovation and financial additionality. The strictness of the EU's requirements is in this respect proven by the fact that out of the 900 eligible proposals, only 275 were selected for possible funding and only 175 of these could be financed.
- ✿ The EU also suggests that the legal framework of the country where the project is intended to be implemented is taken into consideration and what the committee should regard is also whether the national strategy is consistent with the project's objectives. However, the EU thinks that the projects designing facilities to transport and deliver drinking water in the LDCs should be evaluated with a particular attention due to the fact that most LDCs cannot financially support the creation and maintaining of their water infrastructures.
- ✿ The EU is deeply aware of the importance of new technologies helping to reuse wastewater and making water consumption more efficient. Therefore, it stresses the necessity to support research and development in these domains using incentives like additional funding or tax incentives. A special attention in terms of research and development is paid to the processes of desalination which are increasingly considered as a potential solution to problems related to lack of drinking water, however, its possible consequences on the climate change still have not been analysed. Thus the EU pronounces itself in favour of a research in the impact of desalination processes (related not only to climate change).
- ✿ Last but not least the EU proposes to concentrate on examining industrial water consumption by individual industries in order to specify which ones use it efficiently and to use measures aimed at lowering the amount of water used in industrial production afterwards. As the availability and credibility of data are crucial in this regard, the EU would find it useful if the committee supported an effective collection of data in individual states.
- ✿ The EU also suggests that the use of water in agriculture is monitored in more detail because wastage of water in irrigation processes can reach up to 50% in some places. What is more, water use in agriculture is reported to consume more than 75% of water in the developing world making the developing countries more vulnerable. Therefore, the committee should by no means neglect this field and to devote a particular attention and funds to examining possible ways of increasing water use efficiency in agriculture.



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- ✿ The EU also realises that the households can't be omitted when considering the aforementioned measures. The EU's main objective in this regard is to "foster the emergence of a water saving culture in Europe" by developing in individuals a sense of efficient and wise use of water. In fact, there is a large space for the civil society to engage in, because only well informed people can act wisely – also in terms of water and its consumption. Therefore, its efforts should be equally supported by the committee.