

# EUREAU

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European Union of National Associations of  
Water Suppliers and Waste Water Services

Union Européenne des Associations  
Nationales de Distributeurs d'Eau et de  
Services d'Assainissement

## **Note for the Board of Management / General Meeting**

**(June 27, 2008)**

Agenda item Nr : pt 1  
Note Nr: EU0-080627-01

### **EUREAU POSITION PAPER Climate change and Water and Waste Water Services**

#### **Summary**

**EUREAU is concerned about the potential climate change impact on water services. We would wish for improved coordination of European policy, better communication with stakeholders and more research on adaptation opportunities.**

EUREAU is the European federation of national associations of water suppliers and wastewater services. Our members collectively provide sustainable water services to around 405 million European citizens. They reflect the full diversity of the European water services sector and represent both public and private operators. As the focus of a European network, Eureau represents a unique concentration of technical, scientific and managerial knowledge and practical experience in water services.

## **Climate change and European water services**

Climate change is already affecting the water sector from its source materials to its customer base and its recycling routes. The sector is both impacted by and, as a significant energy user, contributes to climate change. Water is one of the most important enablers of economic and social development and public health, and as such needs to be resilient to climate change and shifting weather patterns. There will be increasing pressure on water resources the coming decades. Climate change represents a key challenge for the water sector in terms of availability of water, flooding in urban areas and impacts on water and waste water treatment systems and assets. There are also opportunities for the sector to develop its renewable energy sources.

## **European policy on climate change**

EUREAU believes that to deal effectively with climate change there is a need of coherent cross-sectoral policy. It is critically important that all sectors make it a key priority to understand the urgency and imperative of delivering adaptation solutions in a sustainable and long term manner.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation should be integrated fully into the decision making processes and should be considered at every level of action from policy making to planning and implementation.

EUREAU supports a “systematic check” of climate change impacts of all Community policy areas and legislation by 2009. The EU have an important role to play in ensuring the coordination and integration of climate change into other areas of legislation.

In this respect we believe that there needs to be full consultation, discussion and participation across all sectors to enable joined-up regulation and ensure climate change is fully integrated into the decision making process.

## **Communication.**

There is a great need for more coordination across sectors (for example river basin management planning, and urban drainage / city planning). To effectively tackle the challenge of adapting to climate change in a sustainable way, there needs to be full consultation, discussion and participation across all sectors. It is essential that there is a successful communication strategy to raise public awareness of climate change impacts and adaptation and this should be integrated into the curricula at all levels of education.

## **Climate Change Research**

EUREAU believes there is a need for continued research into climate change impacts on the water industry

- Cost-effective adaptation.(For example aquifer reservoir storage, wastewater reuse, and planned sustainable urban drainage systems to better manage rainwater
  - Improving the prediction of climate impacts on the water sector through modelling.
  - Monitoring of quality and quantity aspects of water resources.
  - Preventive risk management and low-maintenance early warning systems.
- Support to practitioners through guidance, networks and other communications channels.

## **River Basin Management**

EUREAU believes that the programme of measures set out in River Basin Management Plans should take account of both climate change adaptation and mitigation.

We particularly welcome the Commission's proposal (resulting from the Bonn workshop in November 2007) that a chapter on Climate Change Adaptation be included in each River Basin Plan.