

La Déclaration de Strasbourg

La Declaracion de Strasbourg

The Strasbourg Declaration

Die Straßburger Erklärung



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

THE STRASBOURG DECLARATION

Water - a source of citizenship, peace and regional development

The European Water Solidarity network considers water to be an essential component of all civilisations which helps to maintain life, cultural diversity and ethical principles. This common reference nourishes hope for solidarity and democracy in Europe through water and for water.

The background

Such is the political, economic, cultural and social importance of water that the shape of the Europe of tomorrow depends on it. It is part of the shared heritage of nations. The rational, participatory management of water is a vital factor for democracy and sustainable development. With a view to establishing a frame of reference, representatives of civil society (citizens, users, technicians, researchers, businesses and non-governmental organisations), in collaboration with the institutional partners, reached a consensus on the principles contained in the Strasbourg Declaration.

This declaration was adopted at the European Forum: Water, a Source of Citizenship, Peace and Regional Development, held on 12, 13 and 14 February 1998 and was officially deposited at the International Conference 'Water and Sustainable Development' in Paris in March 1998, by Mr Jean Briane, Chairman of the Committee of the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly.

The major issues

1 - Water democracy

The democratic management of water should be developed by means of transparent participatory practices, and representatives of water and water-environment users should be involved in the institutions responsible for water management.

It is necessary to:

- ∇ Acknowledge that, as water resources constitute a «common heritage», they cannot be appropriated by the private sector or the state
- ∇ Apply the principles of sound administration so that public authorities ensure a fair apportionment of water among its various uses
- ∇ Ensure that community interests are protected and that citizens are represented in the decision-making bodies of water services
- ∇ Encourage transparent and dynamic relations between the interested parties by means of a communication strategy based on exchanges of knowledge.

2 – Protection of water environments

The protection of water resources requires an integrated form of management based on respect for the inviolability of ecosystems as a natural asset and on a precautionary approach. Moreover, the needs of the various users should be fully ascertained so that the setting of priorities may be improved, particularly in the field of public health.

This means:

- ▮ Generating greater awareness of water protection as a means of creating harmony between the natural environment and human activities
- ▮ Assessing the ecological, social and economic consequences of transferring water from one catchment area to another
- ▮ Including the economic value of natural environments in the costs of water use
- ▮ Encouraging the transborder management of water resources.

3 - Water services for a fair economy

Water is also a social asset whose management must comply with certain criteria of economic efficiency. This does not mean that it should become a source of speculative profits. The technical and economic viability of water-related infrastructure and employment should be ensured. Technical and financial choices must take account of criteria of social and political acceptability.

This means:

- ▮ Striking the right balance between economic responsibility and decision-making powers by maintaining, as far as possible, the responsibility of local elected representatives and avoiding the privatisation of capital assets
- ▮ Facilitating the financing of projects which benefit job-creating small and medium-sized co-operative, mutual or municipal enterprises
- ▮ Offering water users the means of comparing traditional techniques with suitable alternatives which respect the diversity of management models
- ▮ Giving an economic value to services that encourage sparing use of water and subjecting the charges made for water consumption and waste water treatment to official monitoring.

4 - Water as a regional planning factor

Water policies must take account of regional planning as well as land control and use arrangements, with particular reference to watercourses and transnational aquifers.

The following action should therefore be taken:

- ∟ Promoting the co-ordination of regional administrative activities and joint river basin management
- ∟ Establishing and strengthening demand management machinery that allows a balance to be maintained between water resources and their uses
- ∟ Encouraging the adoption of legislation on the water-related rights and duties of all interested parties
- ∟ Promoting the introduction of economic incentives offering reciprocal long-term advantages for all the parties concerned.

5 - Water: the lessons to be drawn

Information about water should be conveyed to the widest possible audience. The European Forum and European Water Solidarity network recognise the joint and several responsibility of all, including the media.

They therefore recommend:

- ∟ Providing for educational, awareness-raising and information activities
- ∟ Giving priority to institutional strengthening measures in order to develop:
 - human capacities,
 - social capacities with a view to fostering a sustainable attitude towards the use of water
 - institutional capacities with a view to performance, transparency and long-term viability
- ∟ Fostering research and concerted action
- ∟ Developing exchanges and collaboration between the European Water Solidarity network and the various water management partners throughout the world.

List of participants

Monsieur Joao Anselmo
Monsieur Bernard Barraqué
Madame Michèle Barrière
Monsieur Denis Besozzi
Madame Isabelle Bonnetier-Jost
Madame Malia Bouayad-Agha
Madame Lieselott Blunck
Monsieur Jean Briane
Madame Antonella Cagnolati-Staveris
Monsieur Guy Castadot
Monsieur Laurent Chabert d'Hieres
Madame Myriam Chassaing
Monsieur Pavel Chevtchenko
Monsieur Troy Davis
Monsieur Frédéric Dock
Monsieur Vladimir Dronov
Madame Larisa Drozdova
Madame Sevine Ercman
Madame Malin Falkenmark
Madame Karine Garrel
Monsieur Alejandro Gil
Madame Pascale Graffmann
Monsieur Pierre-Marie Grondin
Monsieur Carlos Guerrero
Monsieur Hans Hartung
Monsieur Jaime Hevia-Ruiz
Monsieur Ivan Ivanov
Madame Michèle Jordan
Monsieur Raymond Jost
Monsieur Vincent Jullien
Monsieur Roman Juriga
Monsieur Frédéric Klein
Monsieur Stratis Korakas
Monsieur R. Andreas Kraemer
Monsieur Marc P. Lammerink
Monsieur Fredy Langenfeld
Monsieur Tamas Lantos
Madame Josette Le Foll Picou
Monsieur Marc Levy
Monsieur Aleksander Luczak
Madame Lola Manteiga
Monsieur Patrick Marchandise
Madame Sofia Markopoulou
Monsieur Guillermo Martinez Casan
Madame Marie-Anne Menger
Monsieur Eric Monkhoven
Madame Rina Muller
Monsieur Vicente Nacher Luz
Monsieur Lucien Naegelen
Monsieur Gilbert Naturale
Madame Myriam Niss
Monsieur Mario Onaindia
Madame Esther Peter-Davis
Monsieur Jean-Pierre Ribaut
Monsieur Alain Richard
Monsieur Victor Ruffy
Monsieur Paul Staes
Madame Houria Tazi-Sadeq
Monsieur Pierre-Frédéric Tenière-Buchot
Monsieur Jaroslav Tesliar
Madame Nadège Thareau
Monsieur Mario Vasconez
Monsieur Karl Heinz Vogel
Monsieur Robert Volders
Monsieur Jean-Pierre Wauquier
Monsieur Helmut Weidel
Madame Edith Wenger
Madame Brenda Willeinson
Monsieur Eisso Woltjer
Monsieur Anatoly Yatsyk
Monsieur Benno Zierer

Solidarité Eau Europe

40 rue rathgeber
67100 Strasbourg
Tél. : +33 (0)3 88 84 93 14
Fax : +33 (0)3 88 84 99 18
Courriel : see@s-e-e.org
Internet : www.s-e-e.org