

# Water is too precious to waste

## WATER IS A FINITE PRECIOUS RESOURCE

Although 72% of the Earth's surface is covered with water, **less than 3% of this water is suitable for uses like drinking and irrigation.**

Source : Live Science

Across the EU, water shortages and droughts have increased dramatically in recent decades. They are likely to become more frequent and more severe in the future.

### WATER SCARCITY AFFECTS



at least **11%**  
of the European  
population



and **17%**  
of the EU  
territory

Source: EC - Water Scarcity and Drought in the European Union

### Mediterranean region

Around the Mediterranean\*, some **20% of the population lives under constant water stress** and in summer, over 50% of the population is affected by water stress.

\*Spain, Portugal, the Italian peninsula, Southern France, Cyprus, Greece and Malta

Source: EEA - Is Europe's freshwater use sustainable?

## WATER SHORTAGES

have a severe impact on agriculture, industry and tourism.

When less water is available, the environmental impacts can be huge – there is too little water in rivers and lakes, wetlands dry out, and salt water may intrude into groundwater resources.



**Water Scarcity**  
is no longer confined to a few  
**corners of Europe**, and is fast becoming  
a concern across the EU



**By 2030**  
**water stress and scarcity**  
will probably affect half of Europe's  
river basins

Source: EC - Report on the Review of the European Water Scarcity and Droughts Policy EC - Would you drink your wastewater?

## We need to manage our water resources more efficiently

Treated wastewater is an effective alternative water supply. By boosting supplies of good quality water, in addition to water savings, it can help address water scarcity. Reusing water after appropriate treatment extends its life cycle, thereby preserving water resources.

## EUROPE

more than  
**40,000 million m<sup>3</sup>**  
of waste water  
treated in EU  
every year



but only  
**964 million m<sup>3</sup>**  
of this treated wastewater  
is REUSED

The potential for further uptake is huge: Europe could use 6 times the volume of treated water that is currently used.

## FRANCE



**7.7 million m<sup>3</sup>**  
of waste water treated  
and REUSED  
per year in France

Source: BIO - Optimising water reuse in the EU;  
AMEC - EU-level instruments on water reuse

## WATER REUSE IS GOOD FOR BUSINESSES

By protecting businesses against water scarcity and volatile prices, the European Commission is helping create new business opportunities, and promoting innovative, more efficient and sustainable ways of producing and consuming.

The world water market is growing by 20% every year, and it could be worth 1 trillion € by 2020. European products, services, and expertise will be available to communities around the world.

The EU water sector includes 9,000 active SMEs and almost 500,000 jobs.

A 1% increase in the growth of the water industry in Europe could create up to 20,000 new jobs.

A single framework will make it easier to implement water reuse technologies around the EU.

## Europe needs a supportive framework for water reuse

**In a circular economy, water reuse plays a key role, bringing significant environmental, social and economic benefits.**

There is high potential for increased water reuse but awareness of the benefits of this technology is low, and Europe lacks an adequate supportive framework for water reuse.

Stronger regulatory and financial incentives could help Europe reuse more than 6,000 million m<sup>3</sup> of water every year by 2025. France is one of the Member States with the highest potential for more reuse.

Source: AMEC - EU-level instruments on water reuse

As part of its plans for a more circular economy, the European Commission is developing tools to help expand the use of safe and efficient water reuse technologies.

**An EU-wide framework of minimum requirements for water reuse** will reduce pressure on water resources and ensure the best use of this technology in terms of:



**health  
safety**



**environment  
protection**



**cost-  
effectiveness**

Source: EC - Water Reuse - Background and policy context  
UN - Water and Jobs