

WATER RESILIENCE STARTS WITH CLEAN AND HEALTHY WATERS, WARNS SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE

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Surfrider Foundation Europe reacts on [a leak published yesterday by Contexte](#) on the European Water Resilience Strategy. While Surfrider welcomes the source-to-sea approach, we are alarmed by the lack of any concrete announced measures to tackle the water pollution crisis and urges the Commission to revise and improve its proposal before the official release of the initiative scheduled for June 4 – the same day as the Ocean Pact.

Restoring a broken water cycle and prioritising nature-based solutions will only be possible through concrete measures and guaranteed resources

Surfrider Foundation Europe welcomes the Commission's emphasis on the need to adopt a source-to-sea approach by presenting the Water Resilient Strategy as a complement to the upcoming Ocean Pact¹. We view the alignment of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) positively, provided that this alignment goes hand in hand with strengthened provisions in both Directives and does not open the door to any deregulation of the EU marine and water policy framework. We especially stress the urgent need to address climate change impacts, along with increased and significant efforts and resources to improve their implementation and enforcement.

No water resilience without EU bold action to address pollution

The proposal rightly affirms the access to safe and clean water as a human right and acknowledges that water quality is just as important as ensuring sufficient supply. However, it falls short by lacking concrete policy measures to address water pollution at source, instead relying on technological fixes and short-term costly remediation efforts. This is even more shocking with pollution being recognized as one of the top global risks, and [EU indicators clearly showing our failure](#) to achieve good status under both the WFD and MSFD.

¹ also expected in early June – see Surfrider Europe's reaction following a recent leak [here](#)

The proposed 'measures' to address contaminants of emerging concern are particularly disappointing, as they are not backed up with concrete policy action to tackle pollution at its source. The launch of a public-private partnership to support PFAS cleanup for instance completely misses the point - and the scale - of the crisis we are facing. With regards to nutrients, we welcome the Commission's call to accelerate action and better implement the Nitrates Directive but remain cautious about any prospects of loosening existing measures. Finally, plastic pollution is not even mentioned, despite microplastics being a growing source of pollution, as revealed by the most recent Zero Pollution monitoring outlook. Water pollution has reached every corner of the EU, both impacting ecosystems and threatening human health as never before. Urgent action is needed now to prevent it at source first and foremost.

Fix pollution and overuse before turning to desalination – and get it right!

We welcome the Commission's careful wording regarding the increased use of seawater desalination. It is reassuring to see an acknowledgement that significant efforts are needed to ensure desalination is sustainable, that reducing demand is prioritized, and that its environmental impacts and reliance on fossil fuels are addressed. However, the proposal lacks clarity on how the Commission will concretely act to limit overuse, fix pollution and avoid developing a sector that could further undermine water resilience without essential safeguards. Currently, sea-water desalination places additional pressures on already vulnerable coastal ecosystems and waters, often serving the demands of over-tourism rather than the needs of local coastal communities.

Background and resources:

- [Surfrider Europe's public reaction to the adoption of the European Parliament resolution on Water Resilience, 7 May 2025](#)
- [Toxic tides, confronting the chemical crisis](#), Surfrider Foundation Europe, January 2024

About Surfrider Foundation Europe

Surfrider Foundation Europe, an NGO created in 1990, works to protect the ocean, the coastline, the waves and their users. For 35 years, with a team of experts and 50 volunteer branches in 12 European countries, the association has been working with stakeholders (citizens, private and public sectors) on several major issues: aquatic waste, coastal development, climate change, water quality and user health. Find out more about the association at <https://surfrider.eu/> or via [this video](#)

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