



Speech by Mr Papadimoulis,

Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Strasbourg, 10 June 2011

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you here today in my role as the new Chair of the Committee on the Environment.

I would also like to welcome and give particular thanks to the representatives of the World Water Council, who have played a very active part in the preparation of this meeting.

As you know, this is our second meeting.

The parliamentarians who attended the last forum made a declaration urging governments to recognise the right to water and sanitation as a human right.

They also proposed setting up a World Water Parliament.

These two proposals are on the agenda of our meeting today, and I hope that we will be able to arrive at practical proposals suitable for submission at the next World Forum to be held in Marseille in 2012.



To my great pleasure the appeal launched in Turkey showed that we parliamentarians had realised what contribution we could make in this sphere, which is becoming increasingly critical.

We have two main tasks.

We have to begin by convincing the authorities to legislate and, in particular, to release the necessary funds for investment and infrastructure work, but we must also liaise with local authorities to try to convince them to implement these decisions.

In Istanbul, the parliamentarians also asked for the question of transfrontier water management to be looked into and for guidelines for countries to be drawn up on the use of their water resources.

In this connection, it is my pleasure to inform you that we held a conference in Monaco on this subject in March this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Monegasque authorities, particularly Mr Marquet, again for their hospitality.

As you will see when you read the conclusions included in your meeting documents, the participants highlighted several matters requiring follow-up and action, and pointed out that it was becoming imperative to take stock of the existing legal instruments and define the role of parliaments as the bodies responsible for the implementation of legal instruments.



It was also proposed to look at how we parliamentarians can foster and enhance participation by citizens in the framing of water management and conservation policies.

Lastly, I welcome the fact that we have added a new facet to our activities, namely giving a voice to young people.

It seemed essential to us to add this item to the agenda as we consider it our paramount duty as human beings and elected representatives to leave a healthy, viable environment to future generations.

Water is becoming an ever more sensitive issue and climate change is only compounding the problem.

I would recommend moreover that you read Mr Marquet's excellent report on the subject entitled "Water – a source of conflict".

As Mr Marquet quite rightly pointed out when he presented his report, water can save us but it can also kill us.

It is a source of life but also a weapon of war.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a very full agenda and I do not want to take up any more of your time. I now call ...

Thank you.

