



# Youth Water Manifesto



**Dear participants of the 5<sup>th</sup> European water conference 2018,**

Healthy rivers, lakes and other water bodies are essential for life: now and in the future. We are representatives of active young people and youth organisations from across Europe, who care about the current and future health and well-being of our planet and the people who depend on it. We recognise the outstanding importance of high water management for the sake of current and future generations; therefore, we, as youth, have a responsibility to take action to protect and enhance water bodies to preserve these shared, essential goods.

## Our Vision

The majority of Europe's water bodies have been heavily modified and are under immense pressure from human activity. Hydropower projects, river modifications, pollution and climate change have all contributed to many of their poor ecological conditions.

We believe Europe should set a global example for having rivers, lakes and water bodies that have the necessary space to thrive and are free from excessive human intervention and modification that would compromise their integrity. Natural river systems should be treated as vital assets to society, that contribute great ecological services and at the same time offer innate places of beauty, recreation and retreat.

## Our Demands

The preservation of water bodies in their natural state and the restoration of those that have been degraded must be prioritised. This demands a strong, integrated and well-implemented legal foundation. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) must not be weakened nor cut back but reinforced and implemented more effectively at all levels. This includes:

- Compulsory restoration of river and water bodies to a near-natural state, achieving 'good' status across Europe;
- Protection of our last remaining 'wild' water bodies and natural features;
- Transparency of WFD implementation, allowing national decision makers to be held to account;
- Youth participation on all levels as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Open and accessible information and education for the public; and
- Strict regulations for hydropower projects.

Only with a robust and comprehensive legal base can we contribute to conserve the world's natural diversity, maintain a base for sustainable development and the safety of our water supplies. The improved implementation of the Directive has become an intergenerational task, which requires the inclusion of younger generations who will attain the responsibility to carry the WFD forward.

**We do not inherit water from our ancestors, we borrow water from future generations.**

**We are counting on you and your support.**

Yours sincerely,

Activists from the Youth Network for River Action and Generation Earth.



Generation Earth, WWF network  
for young, active people

