



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0221

Recommendation on promoting transnational governance on water in the interests of conflict prevention and peace

European Parliament recommendation of 17 June 2026 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on promoting transnational governance on water in the interests of conflict prevention and peace (2025/2216(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the UN Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) of 1992,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 May 2025 on the European Water Resilience Strategy¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 June 2025 entitled 'European Water Resilience Strategy' (COM(2025)0280),
- having regard to its resolution of 5 October 2022 on access to water as a human right – the external dimension²,
- having regard to the UN 2023 Water Conference and the adopted Water Action Agenda, and the upcoming UN 2026 Water Conference,
- having regard to the fact sheet of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled 'The Right to Water', published in August 2010,
- having regard to the report by the UN University Institute for Water, Environment and Health of 20 January 2026 entitled 'Global Water

¹ OJ C, C/2026/576, 24.2.2026, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/576/oj>.

² OJ C 132, 14.4.2023, p. 54.

Bankruptcy – Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era’,

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 November 2018 on Water Diplomacy,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 November 2021 on water in the EU’s external action,
 - having regard to the EU guidelines of 17 June 2019 on safe drinking water and sanitation,
 - having regard to Rule 121 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to its resolution of 2 April 2025 on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union’s policy on the matter – annual report 2024³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2026 on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union’s policy on the matter – annual report 2025⁴,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 4 December 2024 entitled ‘Water Politics: Empowering Youth, Women, and Indigenous and Local Communities’⁵,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0150/2026),
- A. whereas water is essential for the survival of humanity and all life on Earth and therefore needs to be managed sustainably and fairly as a common public and global good;
- B. whereas access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right and a prerequisite for health, stability, security and peace, and the full enjoyment of life and all human rights; whereas poor water governance, water scarcity and unequal access can contribute to instability, conflict and displacement; whereas around 2,2 billion people still lack access to safely managed drinking water, 3,5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation, and around 4 billion people experience severe water scarcity for at least one month each year;
- C. whereas inadequate water and sanitation services contribute significantly to the spread of preventable infectious diseases such as cholera, malaria and gastrointestinal diseases;

³ OJ C, C/2025/4390, 9.9.2025, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/4390/oj>.

⁴ Texts adopted, P10 TA(2026)0014.

⁵ OJ C, C/2025/769, 11.2.2025, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/769/oj>.

- D. whereas climate change and unsustainable human activity represents a major threat to water resources and exacerbates water stress; whereas increasing pressure on water resources, caused by rapidly growing populations, rising demand, and unsustainable water and land use, contributes to water scarcity, hunger and conflict;
- E. whereas only about one third of the continental water catchment area was within normal water discharge conditions during each of the past six years; whereas 90 % of all natural disasters are water-related; whereas hydrological cycles are becoming increasingly erratic and are characterised by violent swings between severe drought and devastating floods, driven by climate change; whereas all glaciated regions in the world have reported ice loss in recent years; whereas human activities are responsible for a significant amount of the pollution of fresh water resources worldwide;
- F. whereas water quantity and quality are equally important; whereas the sufficient management of both creates economic and social opportunities;
- G. whereas 60 % of the world's freshwater flows are transboundary aquifers, lakes and river basins shared by two or more countries;
- H. whereas despite progress, transboundary water cooperation remains insufficient globally; whereas out of 153 UN Member States that share transboundary waters, only 43 have operational agreements in place; whereas over 20 countries have no such arrangements, with particularly limited progress seen in Asia and Latin America;
- I. whereas strong water governance, transparency and monitoring in the water and sanitation sector ensure that the use of financial resources serves the public interest and supports sustainable development;
- J. whereas water stress and unilateral actions by countries in transboundary waters, such as pollution, overexploitation, or the construction of infrastructure, may have implications for all states bordering those waters; whereas disputes over access to water feed into and may fuel wider conflicts and economic collapse, with severe consequences for regional stability and human security;
- K. whereas over recent years, conflict over water has exceeded cooperation; whereas despite progress made in providing drinking water and sanitation over the last decade, billions of people around the world still lack access to essential water, sanitation and hygiene services, putting them at risk of disease and deeper social exclusion; whereas certain groups, notably women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, underprivileged communities, disabled people and other groups, are often overlooked or face discrimination in the planning and development of water and sanitation infrastructure; whereas environmental degradation and climate-related risks tend to

disproportionately impact poor and marginalised communities; whereas these conditions are increasingly exploited by criminal networks, terrorist organisations and local militias to strengthen their influence and advance their agendas;

- L. whereas only equitable and sustainable access to water resources can ensure long-term predictability for all; whereas strategic transnational cooperation on water resources allows human activities to be sustainably managed and erratic hydrological cycles to be jointly prepared for, for the benefit of all neighbours;
- M. whereas the Pact for the Mediterranean is a framework for strengthened regional cooperation; whereas water diplomacy should be included among its priority actions, given the increasing pressure on shared water resources across the Mediterranean, including in regions such as the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa; whereas cooperative water management, joint infrastructure projects and dialogue on transboundary resources should be recognised as important tools for conflict prevention, climate resilience and sustainable development;
- N. whereas armed conflict and occupation significantly disrupt water accessibility and transnational water cooperation;
- O. whereas political commitments at the global level for sustainable water management have not been matched by the required finance or action on the ground;
- P. whereas international humanitarian law, specifically the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, provides explicit protections for dams and other ‘installations containing dangerous forces’; whereas the weaponisation of water, including the targeting of water systems and facilities or the resulting environmental damage, constitutes a serious violation of human rights and could amount to a crime against humanity and ecocide;
- Q. whereas contemporary warfare increasingly involves the deliberate targeting and weaponisation of water supplies and water infrastructure, as most recently demonstrated by the devastating destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine by Russia in 2023; whereas the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam caused severe environmental destruction, including flooding, pollution of freshwater resources, loss of biodiversity, and long-term damage to ecosystems, and caused deaths and the mass displacement of the civilian population and deprived them of access to safe drinking water and livelihoods; whereas the destruction of the dam created serious risks to nuclear safety at the nearby Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant; whereas, as a result of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, approximately 1.7 million children in Ukraine currently lack reliable access to safe water;

- R. whereas Parliament has condemned in the strongest possible terms Russia's deliberate destruction of water infrastructure, including dams, as a weapon of war; whereas the destruction has caused severe environmental damage, undermined water security and threatened civilian populations; whereas such acts constitute violations of international law and call for full accountability for those responsible; whereas the Commission and the EU Member States continue to provide assistance to Ukraine in investigating the perpetrators so that they can be prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity;
- S. whereas the EU is supportive of the joint Israeli-Palestinian water governance mechanisms, including the relaunch of existing frameworks such as the Joint Water Committee, with a view to promoting equitable water distribution, improved transparency and effective infrastructure development; whereas unequal access to shared water resources remains a structural driver of instability in the Middle East, particularly in the Jordan River Basin, where historical and ongoing imbalances in allocation and control for Palestinian communities deepen socio-economic disparities; whereas, under existing arrangements, the Israeli authorities exercise effective control over the majority of water resources in and flowing from the West Bank;
- T. whereas as a result of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, there has been extensive destruction of water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, including desalination plants, waste-water treatment facilities and distribution networks, leaving much of the population without reliable access to safe drinking water and exacerbating humanitarian needs; whereas the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported in July 2025 that 89 % of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure had been damaged or destroyed, leaving 90 % of household water insecure; whereas a rapid and unimpeded delivery of materials, fuel and technical assistance is necessary for the repair and reconstruction of critical water infrastructure, including pipelines, desalination units and waste-water treatment plants;
- U. whereas the transboundary impacts of large-scale dam projects implemented by Türkiye under the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP), including the Ilisu Dam, have affected downstream water flows in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and contributed to water shortages, agricultural losses and environmental degradation in Iraq and Syria; whereas Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian stakeholders require a structured and inclusive basin-wide dialogue on the management of the Tigris-Euphrates river system, based on the principles of international water law, including equitable and reasonable use and the obligation not to cause significant harm;
- V. whereas tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia continue, following

the completion and inauguration of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in 2025, which could significantly affect the hydropolitical balance in the Nile Basin; whereas the UN Security Council has repeatedly discussed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam; whereas all parties concerned should refrain from unilateral measures that could exacerbate tensions and should prioritise confidence-building steps, including transparency in dam operations and technical cooperation on water flow forecasting;

- W. whereas the Aras river is vital to Armenia and Azerbaijan for agriculture, economic development and drinking water, while the quality and quantity of water in the Aras river is under strain; whereas a future agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan addressing their shared transboundary water body, including mechanisms for data-sharing, joint monitoring, dam safety, and equitable and sustainable allocation of water for agricultural and civilian use, would allow the river to be a shared resource rather than a source of instability;
- X. whereas pollution and waste carried by rivers and sea currents can accumulate on the coasts of other states, causing environmental, economic and social damage, including to tourism and fisheries;
- Y. whereas water scarcity and the degradation of water resources can also lead to mass population displacement and forced migration, exacerbating food insecurity, poverty and instability in the most vulnerable regions; whereas one of the means to tackle the root causes of migration is to improve water management in third countries;
- Z. whereas armed state and non-state actors in conflict-affected areas use the weakened populations as a means to gain legitimacy by controlling the water resources; whereas access to water infrastructure and control of water infrastructure are increasingly being used as instruments of political pressure, coercion or war;
- AA. whereas public-private partnerships should promote better and more affordable access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all, in particular in the creation and efficient and sustainable maintenance and management of water infrastructures; whereas public investments and policies should encourage and incentivise the private sector to invest in technologies and management practices that enhance sustainable economic activity;
- 1. Recommends that the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy:
 - (a) increase the role of transboundary water governance in EU external action, so that it acts as a meaningful tool for conflict prevention, resolution and trust-building at regional, national

and international level, especially in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and where water is already scarce, particularly in regions of strategic importance; explicitly recognise water stress as a major security, geopolitical and humanitarian risk factor and fully integrate the prevention of water-related conflicts into the EU's foreign, security and development policy;

- (b) address the lack of operational agreements between governments sharing transboundary water basins and make all necessary EU expertise and technical and financial assistance available to support governments in establishing and implementing such arrangements as well as river basin organisations, while fully respecting partner countries' sovereignty and their primary responsibility for water resource management in order to reduce the risk of tension or conflict, foster cooperation and enhance the sustainable management of natural resources; consistently raise issues related to transnational water governance in EU bilateral dialogues with partner countries;
- (c) support partner countries' efforts to create a legal environment and a conducive policy for collaborative water management and strengthen the role of transnational water governance in EU external action and diplomacy; provide the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU Delegations around the world, to this end, with the appropriate financial and human resources to support transboundary water management on the ground, within and between partner countries, and foster the development and implementation of blue diplomacy;
- (d) ensure adequate and efficient funding for EU transboundary water management in EU external action under the next multiannual financial framework through the Global Europe and Global Gateway instruments; strengthen the tailoring of EU external investments in water and sanitation access to fragile and conflict-affected contexts, in order to support peace and resilience, including through increased financing for global access to climate-resilient and sustainable water management and water sanitation infrastructure; ensure that the infrastructure and energy projects financed by EU development cooperation and external policy instruments, including the European Investment Bank, continue to be fully in line with international law, do not undermine transborder water relations, equal access and sustainable management, and facilitate people's access to their land, notably indigenous people; align the funding with the global flagship actions of the EU's first Water Resilience Strategy;
- (e) recognise and strengthen support for the crucial work carried

out by environmental rights defenders and civil society organisations in favour of water preservation, equal access and transboundary water governance; closely involve local environmental rights defenders and civil society organisations in EU support for transnational water governance in non-EU countries and promote their safety and freedom to operate without violence and intimidation; increase support for non-governmental organisations active in the fields of water diplomacy, conflict prevention and transboundary water cooperation, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected regions, recognising their important role in facilitating dialogue at local and regional level, supporting community-based water management, promoting trust-building and contributing to sustainable and inclusive water governance initiatives;

- (f) expand the geographic scope of EU transboundary water governance projects beyond certain parts of Africa and Central Asia to the Americas, the Middle East and North Africa, and East and South Asia through a Team Europe approach, in particular where water insecurity may contribute to instability and displacement;
- (g) strengthen sustainable water and waste-water management by systematically integrating cooperation on infrastructure, technologies and expertise into partnerships and development programmes; support capacity building and institutional strengthening in partner countries to improve the planning, governance and maintenance of water and sanitation services, including through partnerships with local authorities, public services, civil society and community-based organisations; tailor infrastructure investments to local and historical contexts in order to turn water into an instrument of peace and stability;
- (h) strengthen multilateral cooperation on water, notably within the UN by continuing and stepping up the globalisation of the UN Water Convention and supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, and addressing significant inequalities between and within countries in accessing water and sanitation; ensure the continued implementation of the EU's commitments from the 2023 UN Water Conference, while preserving these ambitions and actions in preparation for the 2026 UN Water Conference; intensify multilevel dialogues with countries located within conflict-prone basins, including summits and joint initiatives, as well as long-term cooperation formats;
- (i) highlight that effective transborder water governance depends on the preservation of biodiversity and of the climate, and therefore demand that water management respond primarily to

environmental interests – being a basic need for plants, animals and humans – and be guided by a logic grounded in the public interest, and common public and global goods;

- (j) strengthen global water resilience as a means of fostering stability through the effective implementation of the EU's Water Resilience Strategy, in particular its global actions aimed at supporting access to water and sanitation for at least 70 million people and at strengthening global water governance and engagement in multilateral forums such as the G7, the G20 and the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action;
- (k) invest in a more transparent overview of all ongoing EU support dedicated to the promotion of transboundary water management internationally and ensure the coherence and streamlining of all work and funding across all relevant Directorates-General and between the EEAS and the Commission, while ensuring that the various programmes complement each other and do not overlap; strengthen communication on the EU's efforts and achievements in the field of transboundary water cooperation to raise the profile of this essential tool and the EU's leading role in its implementation;
- (l) promote enhanced international cooperation, including at the level of river basin organisations, to address the growing water crisis; ensure and improve access to clean and high-quality water and sanitation; promote sustainable water management, increase the reuse of water, tackle water pollution, overuse and waste, and implement various innovative water technologies, including nature-based solutions;
- (m) ensure that EU water initiatives worldwide address the persisting data gaps and lack of data sharing between governments by means of equipping partner countries with technical and physical resources to effectively monitor water levels and the quality of transboundary basins, and by exchanging data and fostering common standards for data collection between partner countries in order to increase compatibility; serve as a credible and trusted actor in facilitating the exchange of reliable water information among governments, stakeholders and the public in water-stressed and high-tension settings, including where the sharing of information is sensitive due to security concerns; build on relevant EU experience, programmes, practices and strategies to strengthen the sharing of best practice between regional and national actors, building on relevant EU programmes, practices and strategies;
- (n) promote intergovernmental and regional cooperation instruments in the management of water resources, focusing, in particular, on ensuring the fair distribution of water, and

support local and community-level governance structures; consider supporting public-private partnerships where they contribute to efficient water management and more affordable access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all; incentivise investment in technologies and management practices that enhance the use of sustainable agricultural practices in the production of crops, livestock and fish by both smallholders and larger companies;

- (o) underline the principle of policy coherence for development and of EU policy alignment with partner countries' development priorities, informed by assessments of their impact on local resources, in order to jointly avoid water depletion or pollution in non-EU countries;
- (p) enhance the implementation of integrated water resource management as the core tool that promotes the coordinated development and sustainable management of water, land and related resources, also across borders, in line with SDG indicator 6.5.2, for the mutual benefit of the riparian states, as well as highlighting the importance of the water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus in addressing synergies and trade-offs on water across the EU's external action;
- (q) strengthen EU monitoring and early warning capacities through digitalisation and modern technologies, including satellite surveillance and real-time pollution tracking, which are essential for preventing and combating cross-border pollution and supporting disaster risk reduction; strengthen the monitoring of water scarcity and water-related conflict risks worldwide, such as the weaponisation of water and water infrastructure and the deliberate deprivation of access to water, integrating this monitoring into the conflict-prevention systems of the EEAS Crisis Response Centre;
- (r) incentivise and finance research on sustainable transboundary water management, water sharing, cooperation and innovation, including through Horizon Europe, and explore emerging challenges such as weather modification activities;
- (s) consider tasking the EU Special Representative for Human Rights with preventing and resolving water-related conflicts, promoting water cooperation and the rule of law, and protecting water sources and systems, including during armed conflicts and in transboundary settings and leading, on behalf of the EU, international efforts to protect and restore water ecosystems in line with SDG 6, as water resilience is crucial in addressing current and future health, food, energy and security crises; consult Parliament on the mandate, resources and cooperation arrangements supporting the work of the EU Special

Representative for Human Rights;

- (t) strengthen the role of international law and the competent international courts, and promote dialogue, mediation and regional solutions as primary tools for resolving disputes over transnational water bodies, ensuring clarity and accountability regarding the legal obligations of all states bordering the waters concerned; systematically condemn the use of water as a weapon in conflicts; ensure that perpetrators are held to account;
 - (u) support legal initiatives aimed at securing justice and compensation for the deliberate targeting and destruction of water supplies and infrastructure;
2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.