

A close-up photograph of water droplets falling onto dry, cracked earth. The background is blurred, showing more of the cracked soil. The image is partially covered by a blue diagonal shape on the left side.

EU REGIONS FOR WATER RESILIENCE

Alliance of European Regions
on Water Resilience
and Preparedness for Climate Change

JOINT DECLARATION

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Climate change constitutes one of the most significant challenges of our era, endangering human well-being, the integrity of ecosystems, biodiversity, and economic development across Europe. At the same time, climate change is closely related to the challenge of **water resilience** - including the management of climate-induced water disasters and preparedness for extreme weather events – thus demanding urgent and coordinated action.

Extreme heat, catastrophic floods, prolonged droughts, and forest fires are increasing in both frequency and severity. These impacts directly threaten the security of water resources for human consumption, agriculture, industry, and ecosystems, and undermine social cohesion and economic stability in our territories.

Agriculture is a particularly vulnerable sector as it suffers from drought, soil degradation, water scarcity and extreme weather events. These changes affect the food security of regions and the socio-economic stability of rural areas, which requires strengthening adaptation measures and investments in the sustainable management of water resources.

Water is both a fundamental human right and a public good. Sufficient access to **clean, safe, and affordable water** is essential to the resilience of our societies and the sustainability of our economies. The quality and quantity of water resources must therefore be protected and managed through integrated, climate-adaptive, and regenerative approaches.

Regional governments are thus on the front line in facing extreme events and in defining the relevant policies. As a matter of fact, Regions face diverse geographical, hydrological, climatic, ecological, infrastructural, economic, and social conditions. Adaptation and water resilience measures must be tailored to territories with a multi-level governance and an ecosystem-based approach, within a strong and consistent **European framework**.

As recognized by the **EU Agenda, particularly by the European Water Resilience Strategy and the European Preparedness Union Strategy**, citizens need local, place-based solutions that protect them from unavoidable risks and empower them to adapt. These actions must integrate urban and territorial planning, pollution prevention, drought and flood risk management, digital tools, rapid alert systems, and strengthened links between European, national, regional, and local risk management frameworks.

Building water resilience and climate adaptation at the necessary scale requires a new political commitment and a new level of ambition with European regions as strategic partners.

Purpose

The purpose of this Joint Declaration is to formally establish the:

Alliance of European Regions on Water Resilience and Preparedness for Climate Change

The Alliance is promoted by the Emilia-Romagna Region to create a strategic platform of European regions to strengthen water resilience, preparedness, and climate adaptation across Europe.

The Alliance is a voluntary, open, and cooperative effort for regions to work together, with EU Institutions as well as other relevant thematic networks.

Mission of the Alliance

To empower regional governments in fostering water resilience, preparedness, and territorial security, and enable the strongest connections inside and outside the network, for impactful action.

Objectives of the Alliance

The Alliance shall pursue the following objectives:

1. Encourage interregional dialogue and contribute to EU Policy-Making

Support the interregional European dialogue to develop effective policies on water security, preparedness, water resilience and climate adaptation, as well as to respond to the political call for a strong involvement of regions in EU policy-making. Enhance the regional participation to EU fora related to water and climate resilience.

2. Stimulate and foster Investments in Water Resilience and Adaptation, as well as sustainable water resources management

Cooperate to jointly stimulate investments in territorial water resilience and climate adaptation measures, with particular focus on droughts, floods, intense rainfall, storm surges, and water scarcity in the most exposed regions.

Cooperate to foster investments in water retention, the development of blue-green infrastructure and renaturalization of water ecosystems, the modernization of water infrastructure, and actions aimed at improving the quality and protection of groundwater and surface waters.

Improve regional access to funding and enhance interregional Cooperation to mobilize funds from European Programmes and Initiatives. Cooperate to promote public-private partnerships, blended finance mechanisms and access to assurance funds.

Promote sustainable agricultural practices that increase soil retention, reduce erosion, and improve water balance in agricultural areas, including through development of natural retention solutions and regeneration activities in the agricultural landscape.

3. Accelerate Collaborative Research and Innovation

Foster joint research initiatives, expert exchanges, twinning arrangements, study visits, workshops, and conferences to deepen common understanding of climate-water dynamics, advanced technologies including nature-based solutions and sponge facilities, also by taking advantage of Big Data and High Performing Computing and the Copernicus Thematic Water Hub. Encourage the uptake of innovation into policy frameworks.

Further research and innovation in the agricultural sector, in particular in water-saving technologies, water recovery and reuse, nature-based solutions and systems that increase the resilience of agricultural production to drought and extreme weather events.

4. Promote Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building

Enable an exchange of best practices, policy approaches to preparedness, governance models, investment strategies, solutions, and implementation tools, including in emergency management and post-disaster reconstruction, following the “build back better” principle. Enhance the regional dimension of the European Water Academy with a regional integrative network of water resilience practitioners.

5. Enhance Public Awareness and Accountability

Improve awareness of water-related climate impacts and viable adaptation strategies among regional stakeholders and socio-economic ecosystems, also through innovative and communication approaches, including synergies with the European Drought Observatory and the European Flood Awareness System.

Accountability for actions related to water resilience and preparedness to climate change will be assured by tracking progress and results.

Governance and Cooperation Framework

By joining the Alliance, the regions intend to collaborate through a dedicated and forward-looking Alliance. The partnership will establish a governance and collaboration framework that empowers each member to actively participate in strengthening their region's water resilience and preparedness initiatives.

Members, by sharing a commitment on Water resilience and Preparedness to Climate Change, intend to:

- work in a spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual learning in implementing the objectives of the Alliance;
- strengthen the role of regions in advancing the Water Resilience, Preparedness and Climate adaptation agendas;
- promote a strategic dialogue with the European Institutions and bodies to both contribute EU policy-making and access to funding opportunities;
- identify effective, innovative, and ecosystem-based solutions.

Date

Brussels, 4 March 2026

ANDALUSIA	BALEARIC ISLANDS	BASQUE COUNTRY
	 Govern de les Illes Balears	
CARINTHIA	GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA	REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE
LAND  KÄRNTEN	 Generalitat de Catalunya Government of Catalonia	
EMILIA-ROMAGNA	FLANDERS	HESSEN
	 Flanders State of the Art	
LOWER AUSTRIA	REGION OF MURCIA	RÉGION NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE
	 Región de Murcia	
OCCITANIE	SOUTH MORAVIAN REGION	STYRIA
	 south moravian region	
UPPER AUSTRIA	COMUNITAT VALENCIANA	WIELKOPOLSKA
 UPPER AUSTRIA 	 GENERALITAT VALENCIANA	

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