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**Subject: Mission Letter WE Vision Leadership Team on Water-Smart Rural Areas**

Dear Bruno,

It is my great pleasure to inform you that the Board of Directors of Water Europe (WE) has decided to appoint you as a member of the WE Vision Leadership Team (VLT) on Water-Smart Rural Areas for the period 2021-2024.

It is an interesting time for water. The EU agenda for a green and digital transition that 'leaves nobody behind' has brought forward a powerful political narrative and concrete opportunities to promote sustainable water management very much in line with Water Europe's Vision for a Water-Smart Society. This is not just our own claim. Quoting the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi in his speech to the Cairo Water Week 2021: *"Our objective is to develop and secure resilient water management and a sustainable circular society, the so-called Water-Smart Society."* It is now up to us to make it happen!

**Water Europe and the Water-Smart Society**

Water Europe (WE) is the voice and promoter of water-related innovation and RTD in Europe. All WE activities are guided by our Water Vision "The Value of Water". WE is a purpose-driven multi-stakeholder association representing the whole diversity of the water eco-system with the ultimate objective to achieve a Water-Smart Society.

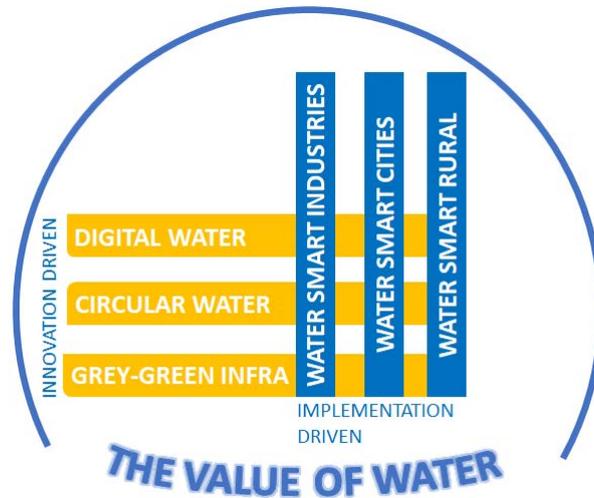
A Water-Smart Society is defined as a society in which:

- the true value of water is recognised and realised,
- all available water sources are managed in such a way that water scarcity and pollution of water resources are avoided,
- water and resource loops are largely closed to foster a circular economy and optimal resource efficiency,
- the water system is resilient against the impact of climate change events, and
- all relevant stakeholders are involved in the governance of the water system.

**WE Vision Leadership Teams (VLTs)**

WE Vision Leadership Teams are the strategic think tanks of WE that are tasked with driving the progressive implementation of the Water Europe Vision in order to achieve a Water-Smart Society. VLTs are about visionary leadership and teamwork. They are part of the WE Collaboration Programme and also provide input on request to the WE Advocacy Programme and the WE Policy Advisory Committee (WE PAC) for the purpose of shaping the WE policy positions and responding to public consultations by the European Commission.

For the Programming Period 2021-2024, the VLT matrix will consist in three horizontal VLTs that are innovation-driven: Digital Water, Circular Water, and Grey-Green Infrastructures, three vertical VLTs that are implementation driven: Water-Smart Cities, Water-Smart Industries, and Water-Smart Rural Areas, and a holistic VLT on the Value of Water for our society and economy.



What is the role of the Vision Leadership Teams?

- Provide the strategic and frontward drivers for the achievement of a Water-Smart Society.
- Contribute by providing the directions for the implementation and the update of the Water Europe Vision and SIRA by identifying and setting the priorities for R&I for the water sector.
- Represent and act as ambassadors for Water Europe by promoting strategic bridges and contacts to systematically interlink the different elements of the *water ecosystem*.
- Collaborate with and provide strategical inputs on the WE Vision implementation to WE Working Groups, Members and WE strategic stakeholders.
- Are essential in driving the WE Water-oriented Living Labs (WoLLs) development and implementation agenda, fostering the market outreach of R&I results, and striving towards the achievement of the SDGs, and especially the SDG 6.

Each VLT shall:

- Develop a work plan for the duration of its lifetime and annual reporting on its activities.
- Contribute to the production of at least one WE White Paper.
- Organise regular VLT meetings – It is suggested to have at least one VLT meeting per month.
- Represent Water Europe and VLT members as Water Europe Ambassadors in public events.

VLTs operate in full compliance with the WE Vision, Strategy, and governance rules. All VLT members are considered as WE Ambassadors and need to comply with the WE Code of Conduct, as reflected in the WE Bylaws.

### Your mission

The VLT Water-Smart Rural Areas will develop migration paths to the future Water-Smart Society with a focus on rural end-user needs and the circular economy. The VLT defines the visionary benchmarks for supporting the engagement with and the creation of multi-stakeholder Rural Living Lab environments and organisations willing to collaborate in realising the WE Vision. The VLT will support the engagement of large-scale real-life rural WOLLs in which combined research and innovation results, as well as new governance, economic and finance models can be validated and taken to the market by defining paths towards the future Water-Smart Society. The development of symbiotic strategies for water management with Urban and Industrial environments will also be part of the VLT Program.

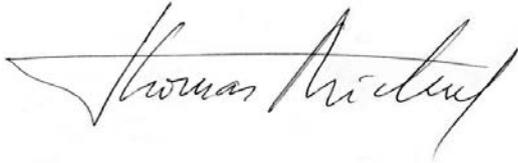
### **The way forward**

The mission outlined above is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Other opportunities and challenges will no doubt appear over the course of the next years. On all of these issues, I would like to ask you to work closely with me, the Water Europe Team, and the other Water Europe Ambassadors to ensure the impact of our joint efforts and activities.

We look forward to starting this new journey with you. Our destination is the Water-Smart Society, and our vehicle is the VLTs but the fuel to make all these happen is your will, your energy, your commitment. I would like to thank you, in advance, for taking this active role in our mission and to wish you a great journey ahead. We are ready to go!

Brussels, 22 November 2021

Tomas Michel  
WE President

Handwritten signature of Tomas Michel in blue ink.

Durk Krol  
WE Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Durk Krol in blue ink.