



EU Water Initiative: Multi-Stakeholder Forum

Thursday 25 August (9-12.30)

World Water Week, Stockholm, Sweden

Opening Remarks by the Polish EU Presidency

- Dear colleagues, dear friends, on behalf of the Polish EU Presidency, I would like to thank you for the invitation to speak here today.
- Before looking ahead and giving an overview of the Presidency's efforts on water in development, I would like first to recall the Council's recent work:
- *'Clearly, we want to see water and sanitation integrated better into the EU's future development policy and we look forward to taking those discussions forward'*. With these words, the EU High Representative (Catherine Ashton) pushed forward the ongoing revision of our water policy framework and implementing capabilities at the Foreign Affairs Council, 24 May 2011.
- The Hungarian EU Presidency injected great momentum into the Union's effort to update our water and development policy. Just before the Polish Presidency, the Council called for an updated and strengthened EU policy and implementation framework for water in developing countries that 'recognize the inter-linkages between water and other sectors of development policy and reinforce the catalytic role of water in inclusive growth and for sustainable development.'¹
- The ongoing revision of the EU Water Initiative², is yet another driver in the process towards strengthening the role of water in the EU development policy. Later, this morning, we will continue this process and be able to identify synergies and windows of opportunity.

¹ Protection of water resources and integrated sustainable water management in the European Union and beyond - Council Conclusions of 21 June 2011

² Launched in 2002 at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (<http://www.euwi.net>)

- Obviously, the efforts to strengthen our water policy are gaining momentum. That is also needed as we have no time for complacency! The Union stands by the commitment to halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation before the 2015 MDG deadline. While expecting the Commission's proposal on 'Water in Growth and Development' somewhere in 2012, the Polish EU Presidency will help to push ongoing efforts forward. Water is part of our preparations for Rio+20 and, in this context, it will be important to have a good review of the EU Water Initiative. The Presidency will also kick off Council negotiations on the future EU Development Policy in October 2011 when the Commission Communication is adopted. Depending on outcome of negotiations among Member States in the Council and the efforts of the incoming Danish Presidency, water is likely to feature as an important cross-cutting element when the process is finalized during the spring of 2012.
- With these words, I thank you for inviting the Polish Presidency to this meeting and wish you good and constructive deliberations.