



# WE@EU:

WATER EFFICIENCY IN EUROPEAN URBAN AREAS

## WE@EU Declaration

Considering:

- (a) the importance of water for our region, citizen's well-being, ecosystems and economy;
- (b) the ratification of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the need to "*substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors*" within goal 6 both in our region and across the world;
- (c) the need to further improve the sustainable and efficient management of water to ensure the efficient implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive;
- (d) the role of regional clusters in promoting water efficiency and innovation across Europe, and in particular the achievements of the "Water Efficiency in European Urban Areas (WE@EU)" project bringing these clusters together and building international partnerships;
- (e) the Leeuwarden Declaration launched in February 2016 during the European Innovation Partnership on Water Conference, calling for actions to accelerate "innovation development in the water sector and removal of innovation barriers in Europe and beyond";
- (f) the Urban Water agenda for 2030, that identifies water challenges and specific objectives for cities, that will require the commitment on specific actions for mayors, managers, RTD institutions and business entities

Participants and organisers of WE@EU final event recognise that:

- (a) water efficiency is a requisite for sustainable development and low-carbon economy and involves innovative approaches with the participation of many stakeholders
- (b) water innovation should form an important part of smart specialisation strategies, operational and cooperation programmes for cohesion policy, rural development programmes as well as implementing projects in climate change adaptation plans,
- (c) international cooperation within and beyond Europe offers opportunities for further enhancement of European innovation especially in the area of water efficiency;

- (d) regional water innovation through clusters represent an important and valuable asset within Europe;
- Regional research driven clusters can play a major role on **supporting innovation through problem oriented solutions** by: bringing knowledge links between the “Quadruple helix” (Society-Research-Business-Public Authorities); demonstrative sites for water efficiency innovations at regional scale; and raising awareness of water efficiency to stakeholders (**integrate-demonstrate-validate**);
  - Clusters can foster **high-level trans-national cooperation** in Research, Development and Innovation activities to tackle common water challenges, enhancing the participation of SME, Academia and public authorities within Europe;
  - Cluster oriented **internationalisation activity** is supporting the position of Europe as a global market leader in water related innovation and technology;
- (e) It is of special relevance to explore and implement new approaches to increasing financial flows in the water sector towards innovation, by unlocking and mobilizing new financial sources offered by public bodies (regional, national and European funds), as well as private actors (banks, venture capitalists among others).

## Partners



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