



## Feedback from the European Marine Board Secretariat to the European Commission's call for evidence on [The European Water Resilience Strategy](#)

(27 February 2025)

The European Marine Board (EMB) welcomes this initiative to address water challenges comprehensively across the EU with consideration for global implications. EMB supports the outlined objectives but urges the EC to also consider their wider implications. Reduction of pollution across the water cycle is critical not only for the clean water provision, but also to protect the health of citizens and natural ecosystems. Likewise, a competitive and circular water industry will also be critical for climate action and resilience.

EMB applauds the EC's focus on the full water cycle including all water bodies (terrestrial, coastal, marine, groundwater). We highlight the strong links between this initiative, the EU Oceans Pact and the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters (Mission Ocean) and recommend that the EC reviews all related documentation and project outputs.

The Ocean and Fresh Water chapter of EMB's foresight publication *Navigating the Future VI* (<https://www.marineboard.eu/publications/nfvi>) calls for the inclusion of additional contaminants (e.g. CEC's, microplastics, pharmaceuticals) and for poorly understood water pathways (e.g. submarine groundwater discharge, glacial meltwater, permafrost) to also be considered in EU water policy; and for early warning systems to be developed to monitor and manage new and emerging pollutants. Managing the terrestrial water cycle is critical for healthy coastal ecosystems, and as such there should be a more comprehensive link between land and sea-based EU policies, as also highlighted in EMB Position Paper on Coastal Resilience (<https://www.marineboard.eu/publications/building-coastal-resilience-europe>).

EMB notes that under the Mission Ocean, Europe is already taking steps towards a clean, water-wise and circular economy. For example the RHE-MEDIation project (<https://rhemediation.eu/>) is testing and validating a chemical pollution remediation technology based on micro-algae solutions that will be integrated within existing water/wastewater treatment systems in the Mediterranean. This technology is enhancing the removal of heavy metals, pesticides, PFAS and other forever chemicals. Challenges in up-scaling these solutions include a lack of detailed knowledge about these technologies (due to the testing phase & Intellectual Property Rights), and concerns about costs, space requirements, waste management, and personnel involvement. Such innovations should continue to be supported beyond the lifetime of respective projects and rolled out across Europe.

EMB urges the EC to make climate change a central consideration of the Strategy. It is critical for Europe's climate preparedness that the water system is managed with future climate change in mind. Global warming will not only directly affect water conditions, extreme weather and flooding, and sea level rise (among others), but also how society responds. Hotter, drier conditions will place additional demands on already limited supply for agriculture and recreation, and inevitably reduce freshwater flow into coastal areas, impacting blue carbon ecosystems such as coastal salt marshes. The results of extreme weather such as flooding and sea level rise will affect where and how people live, and what demands they place on the drinking water and sanitation systems. The melting of glaciers and permafrost may release past diseases, placing new demands on water treatment systems and threatening human- and ecosystem health. The Strategy must plan for and support this ongoing change.

EMB supports the aim to focus monitoring of implementation through existing mechanisms but calls for harmonisation of sampling, analytical research methods, reporting, and interpretation of data from the different components of the water cycle and across disciplines to ensure a proper assessment of the state of the full system. It also calls for harmonisation of legislation and management approaches across the land-sea interface, covering the full water cycle.