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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to Question for Oral Answer B6-0003/2006

pursuant to Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Pierre Schapira and Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez

on behalf of the PSE Group

on the 4th World Water Forum (Mexico 16-22 March)

**European Parliament resolution on the 4th World Water Forum (Mexico 16-22 March)**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the final declarations of the first three 'World Water Forums' in Marrakech (1997), The Hague (2000) and Kyoto (2003);
  - having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of the International Water Conference (Bonn, 2001), which stressed the urgent need to promote new funding from all possible categories of investors, and the need to supplement public sector water financing with private capital contributions, while also fostering initiatives at the local level;
  - having regard to the declaration made at the Dublin Conference (1992) which recommends that an integrated water management system be adopted that recognises the value of water in each of its uses;
- A. whereas the World Water Forum is convened every three years by the World Water Council, as a forum for discussion and guidelines for political decisions in the field of the management of water and water resources;
- B. whereas on the occasion of the Mexico World Water Forum, the theme of which will be 'local actions for a global challenge', a Ministerial Conference and continent by continent regional discussions are scheduled;
- C. whereas the fair sharing of water can be a positive force for regional integration;
- D. whereas the World Water Forum is a centre for crucial decisions, guided by the World Bank and the role it aims to play in the global coordination of the future management of world water resources;
- E. whereas the World Bank and the IMF have played a decisive role in many developing countries in spurring them to privatise the water distribution systems;
- F. whereas the 7th Millennium Development Goal set by the United Nations is to 'halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water', with achievement of this goal also forming a key part of eradicating poverty;
- G. whereas the European Parliament considers that 'since water is a shared resource of mankind, the management of water resources should not be subject to the rules of the internal market' (resolution of 11 March 2004 on 'Internal market strategy: priorities 2003-2006) ;
- H. whereas the issue of water, which is a limited and threatened resource, is more pressing in terms of economic rareness and of coordination within a complex chain of players than it is

in terms of physical rareness;

- I. whereas water distribution is extremely inegalitarian, when it should be a universal public service, with the local level being the most pertinent for its definition and management;
- J. whereas control over water, which is essential for development, determines the conditions in which people exist, particularly when a lack of water triggers food insecurity;
- K. whereas water quality, which is essential to life, is one of the major factors in mortality in developing countries, causing 8 million deaths each year, 50% of which are children, with over a billion people not having easy access to drinking water at an affordable price;
- L. whereas the privatisation of the water distribution system in the less developed countries often results in insolvent communities being deprived of water, owing to the re-centring of investments on the solvent part of the urban population, when human beings should be granted the right to access to water, in order to satisfy their basic needs at a fair and bearable price;
- M. whereas in the context of unbridled urban growth the issue of water and sanitation in the urban environment is a key development question since a municipal capacity for good democratic governance practices can be built around local public services, whereas elected local bodies in developing countries experience immense difficulties in obtaining funding and harnessing the necessary skills;
- N. whereas the Commission has proposed that a billion euros be earmarked under the 9th EDF for the 'European Water Fund', and the Council has given its approval for 500 million, and this Fund enshrines the principle of launching calls for proposals, providing equal opportunities to all players;
- O. whereas the results of the first call for proposals show barely 3% of the successful projects to be ones presented by local authorities, representing less than 1% of the global amount allocated (or 230 million euro);
- P. whereas at its previous meeting in Kyoto the World Water Forum considered that the investment needed to find solutions to the problem of water in the world amounted to 180 billion dollars, or double the current overall level of aid;
  - 1. Regrets the lack of democratic legitimacy of the World Water Forum;
  - 2. Calls for every effort to be made to provide the poorest communities in the poorest countries with access to water;
  - 3. Emphasises that any water management policy must also incorporate protection of public health and the environment. The World Forum should contribute to developing strategies promoting a method of economic and agricultural development that is compatible with maintaining or restoring a high level of water quality, from groundwater up to the water provided to the end consumer;

4. Calls for the resources under the European Water Fund aimed at the ACP countries to be reinforced in the framework of the 10th EDF and for methods of financing to be developed, including private and mixed public-private financing and innovative partnerships, and notably solidarity financing; hopes that the international institutions will increase the share of commitments allocated to water and that debt reduction will benefit investments in water;
5. Calls for local authorities in the European Union to be encouraged to set aside a share of the charges received from users for water supply and sanitation services for decentralised cooperation actions;
6. Calls on the Commission to promote and strengthen regional cooperation in cross-border river basins, with a view to improving the integrated management of water resources and ensuring a sustainable and equitable management of cross-border water resources, in order to prevent conflicts;
7. Emphasises that the management of water resources should revolve around a decentralised, participatory and integrated approach that associates users and decision-makers in establishing water policies at the local level and in a democratic manner, closely tailored to the needs of the public, and emphasises in this perspective the essential role of women in the supply, management and conservation of water;
8. Hopes that cross-subsidies can be introduced to enable the very poor to be supplied with water at an affordable price;
9. Calls for the promotion of education and awareness-raising measures aimed at children, who are the key players for changing behaviour patterns;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Council to acknowledge the fundamental role of the local authorities in water protection and management, hopes they can be provided with direct funding to empower local authorities everywhere in the management of the water sector and regrets that the powers, experience and resources of the local authorities in the European Union are insufficiently called on, built upon and harnessed in European cofinancing programmes, since local authorities in the European Union, owing to their technical skills, know-how and experience are players especially able to assist the local authorities of developing countries;
11. Requests that the Commission represent the European Union at the Mexico Forum with a mandate to:
  - advocate access to drinking water as being a crucial and basic human right, and not an economic good subject simply to the rules of the market,
  - upholding the approaches expressed in this resolution;
12. Hopes that negotiations can be launched within a UN framework on an international treaty recognising this right;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission of the European Union.

