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SECTORAL POLICIES / Interview ENVIRONMENT

European Water Resilience Strategy can become “*great industry adventure*”, according to Danish Minister for Environment

Brussels, 22/10/2025 (Agence Europe) – The Council of the EU adopted its conclusions (see EUROPE B13731A9 - <https://aeur.eu/f/j33>) on the European Water Resilience Strategy on Tuesday 21 October at a meeting of EU environment ministers in Luxembourg. The strategy includes three objectives: - repairing the failing water cycle; - building a water-smart economy; - securing clean and affordable water for all. (see EUROPE B13653A7). Agence Europe met with the Danish Minister for the Environment, Magnus Heunicke, who was responsible for leading discussions during the six months of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU (interview by Florent Servia).

Agence Europe: This strategy is very broad, it tackles many different legislations, it's non-binding and there's no precise objective. What do you think this strategy brings?

Magnus Heunicke: The European Union is arguably the region of the world with the strictest, most detailed regulations on water. And it's needed. But we have not fully implemented it. We haven't reached the goals. And that goes for Denmark as well.

We need to focus on implementation. It is important that we don't just go with one directive and then the other directive and then the other.

We need an industry that is not just using the water of the world and creating pollution, but is actually a part of a circular economy.

If the EU can deliver that, then we know that every other part of the world, even those who are not interested in this right now, will be forced to look at those solutions in the near future, not in maybe 20 years, but actually in the next decade.

Water resources are becoming increasingly scarce, and industry and agriculture consume large amounts of water. Do you think the Strategy should go further in these sectors?

Naturally, we need to consume less water, reuse it and also introduce new ways of making sure that the right investments are being made in water supply systems. This sector, both public and private, is ready to deliver solutions that can reduce water consumption and water loss.

Through innovation?

That's right! I've been meeting with a lot of those companies and they have new ideas about how to pump water and to move water and also to reuse water and to clean up water, from PFAS pollution (polluting chemical substances) for example, so that it can be used in production facilities. I think there could be a great European industry adventure in this.

You emphasise water security and resilience in the conclusions of the EU Council...

It's a paradigm shift. When we used to talk about water, it was mainly me, as Minister for the Environment, and the NGOs concerned by pollution. Now, companies themselves, including the heaviest industries, are concerned: where can they find enough energy and water?

We cannot depend on things that are produced or delivered from other parts of the world. We have to make sure that long-term investments can take place in Europe.

And when those global companies are looking where to invest, they want to make sure that the fundamental things are in place, and they shouldn't encounter any nasty surprises down the road.

How can we ensure that, while producing more energy (which requires more water), we maintain the competitiveness of industry and agriculture, while protecting the environment and our citizens?

As Minister for the Environment, I'm here to create a better environment for people, but also for businesses.

We all need the same thing. It's just not an option to say we reserve all the clean fresh water for industry, or for the healthcare sector, or for one thing alone.

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