Workshop Session 3

"Risk Mitigation and Permitting"

Chair: Lennard Heij (Director General, Bouwend Nederland)

Academic guidance: Christos Makropoulos (Professor of Water Resources and Environmental Engineering, National Technical University of Athens & ISSRI Director)

When presenting the latest reports on the state of water in the EU, Commissioner Roswall underlined that our waters are polluted, that our water supply is under threat, and that we are not reducing the risk of serious floods enough. This session is aimed at addressing the issue of **water quality**.

Water infrastructure is not only fundamental for the supply of drinking water and sanitation but also a critical enabler for resilient urban systems. This workshop will address evolving challenges and opportunities facing both new infrastructure construction and existing stock maintenance, with a focus on water legislation and permitting procedures. Key discussions will include pragmatic solutions to address modernisation needs, investment strategies, and technological advancements in the **current and future regulatory and policy framework**. The spotlight will be on the specific challenges in obtaining permits for construction sites, particularly the restrictions that can delay or block projects due to water quality concerns – especially when exposure to harmful substances is beyond the control of contractors. A proper risk mitigation framework should focus on holding polluters accountable, rather than those impacted by the pollution.

To facilitate the open discussion, an introduction to the *EU Water Framework Directive* as well as other relevant legislation (e.g. the *Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive* and *Drinking Water Directive*) will be provided.

Case study:

Efficient management of water infrastructure: **Dominique Bouillot** is a practitioner and former CEO of SADE, a Veolia subsidiary specialising in water supply networks and related facilities. He will present technical solutions (e.g. digital tools) to enhance water quality and save resources.

Possible points for discussion

- How can the integration of smart meters, digital twins and other smart tools improve the efficiency of managing water infrastructure over its lifetime, and what role do these technologies play in ensuring a reliable and sustainable water supply in the future?
- How can authorities ensure that building permits for construction sites address water quality concerns properly, and what approaches can be taken to define clear solutions and share costs fairly to avoid project delays or restrictions?
- What are the implications of the new EU Water Resilience Strategy and the Critical Entities Directive on water utilities and infrastructure providers? How can we ensure the allocation of sufficient resources in close cooperation with the sector, while also exploring potential avenues and investment strategies to effectively leverage both public and private investments?

This note provides an initial indicative overview of the issues to be developed in workshop session No.3. It is not exhaustive and aims at guiding the brainstorming discussion.

Athens Conference - **WORKSHOP 3 - Chair: Lennard Heij** Colour code: **GREEN**

Draft list of participants

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