



Press Release

Annual Event of the UN Global Compact Network Greece: Highlighting the Importance of Water for Sustainable Development and the Need for Collective Action

Athens, December 11, 2024

The annual event of the UN Global Compact Network Greece was successfully held yesterday, bringing together representatives from the Government, the European Commission, the United Nations, the business community, academia, and civil society to promote responsible and sustainable water resource management.

Titled **“Forward Faster: Water Management as a Business Case”** the event took place on International Human Rights Day, emphasizing the fundamental right to water and the urgent need for ambitious actions by both the private and public sectors through innovative technologies.

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Sofi Daskalaki-Mytilineou, Chair of the Board of the UN Global Compact Network Greece**, stated: *“Sustainability challenges, such as water management, require collective action. We need the scientific knowledge provided by universities, the lived experience of civil society, and the practical insights of businesses. This also demands political will and bold leadership.”*

Ms. Anita Lebiar, Regional Head, Middle East, Eastern Europe, & Central Asia at the UN Global Compact, presented the organization's initiatives, noting: *“One way or another, all businesses depend on nature. Water remains one of the UN Global Compact’s Forward Faster Initiative’s main pillars. Greece is one of the 100 stressed water basins. Promoting collective action of companies for positive water impact is and should remain top priority”*

Government representatives also contributed to the discussion. **Ms. Evi Dramalioti, Secretary General of Coordination at the Presidency of the Government**, highlighted national priorities, stating: *“Our office prioritizes sustainable development through two central monitoring tools: Voluntary National Report submitted to the UN and the Annual Action Plans of Ministries, aligning them with the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals across all policy areas.”*

Focusing on water resources, **Mr. Petros Varelidis, Secretary-General of Natural Environment and Water**, emphasized: *“Water is a public good, not a commercial product. The state must ensure access to high-quality, affordable water for all citizens, with special care for vulnerable groups. Adequate water supply and quality are prerequisites for the prosperity of modern societies. Achieving this requires fully covering operational costs of water supply networks with socially equitable cost-sharing.”*

Speaking on the EU’s water resources strategy, **Mr. Michail Papadogiannakis, Senior Expert, Marine Environment and Clean Water Services, DG Environment at the European Commission**, remarked: *“The EU Water Resilience Strategy will be implemented through a holistic multi-annual, multi-level, cross-sectoral plan aiming at restoring and protecting the broken water cycle, ensuring clean and affordable water and sanitation for all and promoting a systemic approach for a water-smart economy and a competitive EU water industry.”*

Professor Nikolaos Mihalopoulos, Director of Research at the National Observatory of Athens, presented findings from the CLIMPACT initiative, stating: *“Our data on current and future climates indicate rising temperatures, increased flooding, and more severe droughts—highlighting significant climate feedback mechanisms.”*





The second part of the event featured a multi-stakeholder discussion panel on challenges and strategies to accelerate progress. Participants explored best practices and ways to manage water effectively through collaboration.

In this context, **Mr. Charalambos Sachinis, CEO of EYDAP (Athens Water Supply and Sewerage Company)**, noted: *"Drought is the new environmental challenge for water companies worldwide. EYDAP supports the state with short- and long-term plans while implementing a €2.1 billion investment program to protect water resources."*

Ms. Rania Aikaterinari, Chair of the Executive Committee & Vice Chair of the Board at the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), added: *"For more and more businesses, sustainability is now an integral part of their strategy. Regarding water use, they adopt various measures, including saving water, addressing leaks, recycling, reusing, collecting rainwater, and promoting responsible sourcing, synergies, and industrial symbiosis. Technology and innovation are invaluable allies in these efforts."*

Focusing on innovation, **Professor Christos Makropoulos of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** commented: *"There are immediately applicable solutions to shield the country from future water scarcity, in line with circular economy principles. These include reuse and new technologies for protecting and maintaining water infrastructure. Such solutions create opportunities for greater private sector involvement in the water industry."*

Representing Greece's islands, **Ms. Maria Kamma, Mayor of Tilos**, stated: *"Water is not just a natural resource but also a pillar of sustainable development. Proper management can create new opportunities, foster innovation, and ensure environmental protection and social welfare."*

Finally, journalist Ms. Korina Georgiou moderated the event, with SKAI Group as the media sponsor.

[PHOTOS](#)

About the UN Global Compact Network Greece

The UN Global Compact Network Greece is a local network of the largest business sustainable development initiative in the world, the United Nations (UN) Global Compact. Its purpose is to integrate the "UN Global Compact" special initiative of the UN Secretary General by calling on businesses to align their activities and strategies with the Ten Principles, covering the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption, and to contribute to achieving the SDGs. With nearly 100 participating businesses and institutions, the UN Global Compact Network Greece connects local priorities and opportunities with broader sustainable development trends. It tailors global strategies to local actions, supporting its members on their journey toward sustainable development with the expertise and credibility of the UN.

