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Contact Office for European Research
Innovation and Education

Mission of Switzerland to the European Union

Swiss Science Briefing,
Swiss association celebration
and prototype showcase



Eyes on Water: Space, Science and European Resilience

Science for Diplomacy

19 May 2026

Mission of Switzerland to the EU
Place du Luxembourg 1, 1050 Brussels

Image: Floating LÉXPLORE lake laboratory - © Jenny Maner, Eawag

eawag
aquatic research

Event Summary



Water is emerging as one of the most strategic resources of the 21st century and a powerful entry point to science diplomacy. About one third of the European population faces water stress each year, a paradox of intensified floods across the continent alongside growing pressure on water availability. Ensuring water availability and quality require advanced technologies, robust infrastructures, and international research cooperation. In this context, the EU has made water a key priority through its [European Water Resilience Strategy](#).

The EU Water Resilience Strategy is backed by concrete research and innovation commitments. Horizon Europe is a central programme for scaling up water technologies, closing knowledge gaps and strengthening research collaboration. The strategy is consistent with the European Commission's planned [Council Recommendation on Science Diplomacy](#), which aims to reinforce Europe's position as a global science and technology actor and to advance the sustainable management of global public goods such as water.

The Swiss Science Briefing aims to show how cutting-edge research and international collaboration advance our understanding and strengthen resilience around water as a strategic resource. This will be done together with [Eawag](#), a world leading institute for aquatic research and technology within the Swiss ETH Domain, and European partners. Eawag is known for its interdisciplinary approach and its role in bridging science and practice. It contributes to European initiatives such as [PARC](#) and [SOS-Water](#), collaborates with the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA) and engages in international research and policy networks. It advances emerging approaches through initiatives such as the [Climate Solutions Hub](#) as well as the use of novel technologies to generate data and insights for sustainable water management and international cooperation. ESA will illustrate its activities related to water, while the European Commission will outline key instruments, programmes and future directions. [Wetsus](#), the European centre of excellence for sustainable water technology, will show how breakthrough innovation and strategic cooperation can contribute to solve global water resilience. The [National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics](#), will provide on behalf of the [EU Science Diplomacy Alliance](#), an applied science-diplomacy perspective, focusing on water and science diplomacy.

Event Agenda



From 15:00

Registration

15:30 – 15:45

Welcome and introduction

Laurin Reding, Head of Office, SwissCore

Swiss contributions to research, innovation and science diplomacy

Thomas Meier, Head of Sectoral Policies, Transport, Climate and Environment, Mission of Switzerland to the EU

15:45 – 16:30

Keynotes on critical water technologies for Europe

Science and technology for ecological insight and international water cooperation

Christian Stamm, Deputy Director, Eawag

From space to water: Earth observation for sustainable water management

Marc Paganini, Technical Officer, Directorate of Earth Observation Programmes, European Space Agency

Water at the heart of Europe's strategic endeavours

Rolf-Jan Hovee, Head of Sector Oceans, Seas and Waters, European Commission (DG RTD)

Moderation:

Sarah Bühler, Senior Research Advisor/Deputy Head of Office, SwissCore

Event Agenda



16:30 – 17:15

Panel on the interplay of water, tech and diplomacy

Christian Stamm, Deputy Director, Eawag

Pieter de Jong, EU Representative, Wetsus

Liliana Pasecinic, Deputy Head of Unit for Member States Partnerships and International Relations, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

Mounir Ghribi, Director of International Cooperation and Research Promotion (ICAP), National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics, EU Science Diplomacy Alliance

Moderation:

Jana Segmehl, Scientific and Strategic Officer of the Directorate, Eawag

17:15 – 17:30

Closing reflections and outlook on European science diplomacy for global water futures

Jan Marco Müller, Team Leader, Global Approach, Multilateral Dialogue, and Science Diplomacy, European Commission (DG RTD)

17:30 – 19:30

Spring Apéro

Celebration of Swiss association to Horizon Europe and other EU programmes and prototype showcase

With speakers from:



SwissCore

Contact Office for European Research, Innovation and Education

Speakers



Thomas Meier, Head of Sectoral Policies, Transport, Climate and Environment, Mission of Switzerland to the EU

Thomas Meier has been Head of Sectoral Policies at the Mission of Switzerland to the EU in Brussels since July 2022. He joined the Swiss diplomatic service in 2013, serving as Deputy Regional Coordinator Southeast Asia and ASEM in Bern and as Human Security Advisor in Myanmar. Prior to his diplomatic career, he worked in consulting and investment advisory. He studied International Affairs at the University of St. Gallen and obtained a Diploma of Advanced Studies in Conflict Resolution and Mediation from the University of Basel.

Christian Stamm, Deputy Director, Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag)

Christian Stamm is Deputy Director at Eawag. He studied Biology at the University of Zurich and holds a PhD in soil physics from ETH Zurich. His main research focuses on the transport of agrochemicals from soils to water bodies, sustainable agriculture and water quality, as well as the ecological effects of micropollutants in aquatic ecosystems. In addition to his role at Eawag, he is President of the foundation Praktischer Umweltschutz Schweiz (Pusch).

Marc Paganini, Technical Officer, Directorate of Earth Observation Programmes, European Space Agency

Marc Paganini is a Technical Officer at the European Space Agency (ESA), working in the Directorate of Earth Observation Programmes. He holds a degree in electronic engineering from the University of Liège (Belgium) and has over 25 years of experience in Earth observation satellite missions. His work focuses on the use of satellite data for environmental monitoring, supporting international environmental conventions, and advancing applications for sustainable development.

Rolf-Jan Hovee, Head of Sector Oceans, Seas and Waters, European Commission (DG RTD)

Rolf-Jan Hovee is Head of Sector for Oceans, Seas and Waters at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD). In this role, he works on EU research and innovation policy related to oceans and water, including the development of strategies and initiatives supporting marine sustainability, water management, and international cooperation in aquatic systems.

Speakers



Pieter de Jong, EU Representative, Wetsus

Pieter de Jong is a EU Representative at Wetsus. He studied Environmental Science at the Wageningen University & Research. His expertise ranges from water technology, research and innovation and business development. Alongside his position at Wetsus, he is the Co-Leader of Resource Recovery from water at Water Europe.

Liliana Pasecinic, Deputy Head of Unit for Member States Partnerships and International Relations, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission

As Deputy Head of Unit, Liliana is responsible for the coordination of JRC international partnerships, with countries associated to Horizon Europe, third countries, as well as JRC's collaboration with multilateral organisations and global initiatives, such as G20 and G7. She holds academic degrees in economics and philology, including a PhD, and a longstanding experience in international relations.

Mounir Ghribi, Director of International Cooperation and Research Promotion (ICAP), National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics (OGS), EU Science Diplomacy Alliance

Mounir Ghribi is an expert in international cooperation, science diplomacy, and Euro-Mediterranean relations. He serves as Director of International Cooperation and Strategic Partnerships at OGS and is actively involved with EMUNI University in advancing academic and research collaboration. His work focuses on sustainable development, blue economy, and building partnerships across Europe, the Mediterranean, and global institutions. He holds a PhD in Land Use Planning and Management of the University of Trieste.

Jan Marco Müller, Team Leader, Global Approach, Multilateral Dialogue, and Science Diplomacy, European Commission (DG RTD)

Jan Marco Müller is Team Leader for Global Approach, Multilateral Dialogue and Science Diplomacy at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), where he oversees the development of a European framework for science diplomacy. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Marburg (Germany) and has an extensive career at the science-policy interface, combining research management, scientific advice, and diplomacy.