Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the World and European Water Day, on 22 March 2012

“Safe drinking water and sanitation are crucial for a healthy and dignified life. Yet millions of people worldwide are still without access to clean drinking water and thus deprived of a basic human right. Every day, more than 4000 people die of diseases resulting from the lack of access to clean drinking water, mostly children under five years of age. More than 2.4 billion people also remain without adequate sanitation facilities.

The EU is working hard to improve access to clean water and sanitation in many partner countries. EU water and sanitation programmes provide almost €400 million per year, targeting some 35 partner countries, helping to build infrastructure for drinking and waste water systems, providing basic sanitation and hygiene and enhancing water management. The EU is strongly committed to promoting concerted international action to address the critical role of water for human and economic development, as well as security.”

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland† and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
† Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.