



## GLOWACON Osaka expo

18/09/2025

Osaka, Japan

Mayor of Osaka,  
Dear Mr. Musemzl  
Dear colleagues from the European Union  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your invitation to participate in this event focusing on the activities of the Global Consortium for Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance for Public Health.

This is a moment of great interest for the World Water Council.

In all cultures, throughout history and geography, it is customary to write and say that “water is life.” This is true! But it is not only water... More certainly, everyone can think and say: health is life, and water is undoubtedly only one important element of health.

Health! The word seems to have two origins, which is interesting. Health from the Latin “sanitas”: the health of the body. Good physical condition.

And then there is the origin of the Old English “Health,” which is actually of Germanic origin and means “whole.” And finally, there is the word “salus,” from “salvus,” which means “fullness” or “redemption,” even “salvation.” This look at the origins of the word “health” shows us that it is not simply the absence of disease or infirmity. It also refers to a state of harmony, even the health of human society.

So, dear colleagues, why are we here today in this ancient and beautiful city of Osaka? I would like to take this opportunity to thank Osaka for its hospitality and congratulate its mayor on the great success of this Expo. I remember coming here to Osaka in 2003 to participate in the 3rd World Water Forum.

So yes, why are we here? Certainly, we are all convinced that water is a major priority for the future of humanity, but that's not all! We share the idea that Health, along with Food and Nature, is fundamental to the survival of our planet. And let's be honest, this idea is relatively recent. The terrible Covid pandemic has greatly contributed to this awareness.

Let me take a moment to tell you the story of that moment. It's a short story, but it also explains why we are here today.

During the first wave of Covid in the spring of 2020, I received a phone call one morning from my friend Ahmet Saatci, who is here today and whom I would like to welcome.



Ahmet said to me : “We have understood and, I believe, discovered how to detect the pandemic through the wastewater from Istanbul's treatment plants.” Silence! And I said to Ahmet : “If this is a joke, it's not funny.” And Ahmet replied : “It's serious, I'll send you a note proving it.”

This is when it becomes clear that Covid detection is possible, not only in treatment plants, but also in networks, buildings, train stations, hospitals, airports, anywhere where effluent from public and private toilets can be analyzed.

And so, in just a few weeks, an international network has been established that will be, and is, a step forward for science and a benefit for the world!

We are proud to say that the World Water Council, thanks to Ahmet Saatci and Bilge Kocamemi, is a pioneer in the link that has been established between water and health.

And after them, I would like to thank the organizations, companies, and NGOs that constitute GLOWACON, which today houses WES, Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance.

We also extend our appreciation to the European Union through EC HERA (European Commission Health Emergency Preparedness and Response), which very quickly provided support to WES and enabled the establishment of GLOWACON.

That's it for the recent history.

Today, the World Water Council, through my presence and my voice, confirms that the creation of a Task Force on Water Quality & Health in 2019 was no coincidence. And it was this Task Force that promoted Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance, under a One Health Approach.

And my first message to you is to mention and repeat that health and water are one of my top priorities. Indeed, how can we hope to have enough water to feed the planet if that water is not of good quality?

And what do we witness today? Against a backdrop of climate complexity, population growth, and urban anarchy, the planetary machine is breaking down. So many men and women are struggling to drink, eat, breathe, and receive medical care, at a time when human intelligence, and I do mean human intelligence, is embarking on a digital revolution unprecedented in the history of our civilizations.

We are navigating between water shortages, water excess, and polluted water. The world is no longer divided between arid and humid regions.

Look at the droughts in eastern Korea, look at the torrential rains in Dubai, in Jeddah, and in the Sahel belt from Somalia to Senegal.

The conclusion is clear: tomorrow's droughts and floods will require the same approaches and the same commitments to secure water resources in terms of quality and quantity.



And you can see for yourselves the consequences in terms of health, in the face of major pollution from megacities, the resurgence of certain water-borne diseases and new pandemics.

And of course, this new situation here and there has major implications in terms of investment to reserve, secure, transfer, treat, distribute, purify, and recycle.

Of course, we will amplify policies of sobriety, and we will promote digital innovations in order to save the resource, but it is certain that in order to heal, to feed, and to protect nature, we will need significant additional amounts of water.

This clearly means that, above all else, we must secure our water resources. Water security must take precedence over all other commitments. This gives rise to specific imperatives that I will summarize in three words: “preserve, reserve, serve.”

Preserving our waters, our rivers, and our aquifers is the foundation of resilience.

Preserving is to secure for tomorrow and for future generations.

Serving is ensuring access, equity and justice, in how we provide water to all, rich and poor, urban and rural alike.

At each of these milestones, the water-health link is present and it's at this moment that wastewater and environmental surveillance (WES) contribute to resilience and preparedness by:

First : providing real time data for early warning of pathogens, viruses, and antimicrobial resistance.

Second : detecting contaminants of emerging concern and supportive pro-active risk management.

Third: guiding the safe reuse of treated wastewater, strengthening food safety and sustainability.

Fourth: serving as a cross-cutting tool for public health, animal health and environmental monitoring.

Fifth : delivering rapid monitoring capacity in emergencies such as wars, floods, and earthquakes but also droughts when all traditional systems may be disrupted. As you know Dakar and Bali Forums were examples where WES activities were advancing under World Water Council's frameworks.

And in Riyadh during the 11<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, more space and time will be dedicated under the theme Water for Humans and Nature. So, you have to ensure that our Council has broad goals in this area.

A. Raise awareness and build capacity to integrate what we call the Five Fingers Alliance between water, health, food, nature and energy.

B. Promote governance models that align sectoral policies and foster joint action.



C. Identify and share best practices demonstrating successful integration of WES into health and water systems.

D. Encourage inclusion of One Health Principles in national and international policies and agreements.

E. Foster cooperation in transboundary and emergency contexts, where WES can serve as an affordable and effective surveillance tool.

With the sound advice of Bilge Kocamemi and Ahmet Saatci, these are some of the messages I would like to deliver to you today.

You will understand from what I have to say that the World Water Council places Health, along with Food and Nature, as one of the major priorities for the years to come, a priority indissolubly linked to water.

As such, WES is not just a technical instrument, but a major tool for innovation, governance and even diplomacy.

Through this cooperation, we are moving forward the cause of water and the right of all people to benefit from it.

And I would like to thank the European Union for joining us in this endeavor. We need your expertise, your capabilities and your commitment.

For its part, the World Water Council is committed to raising awareness among governments, parliaments, local and basin authorities, and civil society as a whole, to mainstream Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance into the global water and health agenda.

This is our contribution to development and peace. The peace of water is also the peace of the world.

Thank you very much. Thank you to each and every one of you for what you do. Thank you for what we are going to do together.