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**Euway, a project to protect water resources**

***At Eima International, Agia/Cia presents a training course to transmit good irrigation practices to farmers. The issue of wastewater use.***

The existence of a water emergency is obvious to all. Less obvious is the magnitude of this crisis, a very heavy burden that affects the entire world. A few studies and statistical data can provide the scale of the problem, and can adequately frame the terms of the global water crisis.

According to the UN Report, the world could face a 40 per cent water shortage by 2030, due to global warming and increased consumption. The same report points out that some 4 billion people already live with severe water scarcity for at least one month a year, due to water stress, and ongoing climate change is likely to cause variations in seasonal availability throughout the year and in different locations.

Global water use has increased 6-fold in the last 100 years and continues to grow steadily at a rate of about 1% per year, due to population growth and changing patterns of resource production and consumption. This increase is unlikely to be offset by an increase in the amount of water used for irrigation, which currently accounts for 69% of all freshwater withdrawals.

It is clear that we have now moved from an occasional crisis to a chronic problem. Globally today, drought already affects 1.5 billion people, with UN estimates predicting that by 2030, 47% of the population will be living under water stress conditions.

By 2050, 240 million people will have no access to drinking water and 1.4 billion no access to basic sanitation if the current scenario doesn’t change.

**Agriculture plays a leading role in this context for several reasons**. Drought-induced yield losses are occurring and questions are increasingly being asked about the sustainability of certain crops and agricultural activities.

An interesting figure for **Italy** shows that in **Italy the agricultural sector absorbs 60% of the country's entire water demand**, followed by the industrial and energy sector with 25% and civil uses with 15%.

Eima International addressed all these issues in two conferences. The first, promoted by FederUnacoma/Assoidrotech and entitled 'Water Resources, a Global Emergency', was held yesterday afternoon and featured as speakers Prof. Attilio Toscano of the University of Bologna and Mr Jacopi Fratus De Balestrini, representing Assoidrotech. The second took place in the morning today and was entitled 'Water a resource to be protected between sustainability and opportunities'. Organised by Agia/Cia, the conference was attended by **Enrico Calentini,** national president of Agia/Cia, **Angiolo Martinelli**, manager of the Sustainable Use of Water Resources of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, **Roberto Bernabini**, deputy director general of the Romagna Land Reclamation Consortium, **Stefano Francia**, president of the association Agricoltura è vita/Cia and, connected from Cop27 in Egypt, **Federica Matteoli** of Fao.

On this occasion, the Euway (*Efficient Use of Water among Agricultural Youth*) project was presented, funded with 400,000 euros by the European Union and involving five countries (Italy, Belgium, Germany, Ireland and Spain).

This project aims to achieve good water use practices by 2024, with a dedicated technical platform and a focus on training young farmers in this area.

In the background there is talk of the appropriatness of using purified wastewater

for irrigation purposes. By June 2023, Martinelli noted, the implementing decree of EU Regulation 741/2020 will be issued, which will again regulate the entire matter. This is a thorny topic because the use of this water can only be properly achieved with substantial investments capable of bringing water to the quality required for its proper use in agriculture. Something that already happens in some countries (Israel and Cyprus, for example) and that still needs to take many steps in Italy.

**Bologna, 10 November 2022**