

BWF 2025 Program: The Grey Zone of Water

Wednesday, 4 June 2025

9:00 – 9:40

OPENING ADDRESSES

Marko Gajić, BWF co-founder, Slovenia

Milin Patel, BWF advisor, United Kingdom

Aleš Musar, First Gentlemen of the Republic of Slovenia

Anton Mežan, Mayor, Municipality of Bled, Slovenia

Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Ara Mkrтчyan, Deputy Minister of Environment of the Republic of Armenia

Anthony Agotha, Ambassador-at-Large and Special Envoy for Climate and Environment, European External Action Service, Belgium

Satja Sajko, BWF Young, student at the Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Matjaž Juhart, secretary, Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Slovenia

Aleš Polajnkо, District Vision Chairperson, Lions Clubs Association Slovenia, District-129 Slovenia

9:45 – 11:15

PANEL 1: Global climate change, industry, people: the general state of water, the blue economy, and contaminants in water that are not under regulatory control

Panel discussion will explore the intricate links between climate change, industrial activity, and human behavior - and their collective impact on our most vital resource: water. From the root causes of scarcity and pollution to the journey of unregulated pollutants from source to sea, this session will uncover the hidden drivers of water degradation and their profound effects on ecosystems and communities.

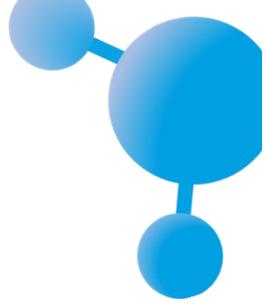
Framed within the context of the blue economy, our experts will spotlight innovative, sustainable solutions and global best practices. Together, we'll explore how industry, governments, and citizens can collaborate to protect water resources and build a resilient, water-secure future.

Moderator: **Aleš Musar**, First Gentlemen of the Republic of Slovenia

Panelists:

Alistair Boxall, Professor in Environmental Science in the Environment and Geography Department, University of York and NERC-funded ECORISC Centre for Doctoral Training, United Kingdom

Uroš Vajgl, State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy, Slovenia



Ladislav Faigl, Director, Water Protection Department, Ministry of Environment, Czechia

Martin Grambow, former Bavarian Water Director, Germany

Johan O. Verboom, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Dagmar Behrendt Kaljariková, International Relations Officer, European Commission – Directorate General for Environment, Belgium

Anthony Agotha, Ambassador-at-Large and Special Envoy for Climate and Environment, European External Action Service, Belgium

11:15 – 11:45 Coffee break

11:45 – 13:15 **PANEL 2: The global role of technological innovations in addressing modern-day challenges in water availability**

As climate change, pollution, and mismanagement threaten global water supplies, this panel will highlight the vital role of technology in securing water for people and nature. From desalination to reuse, storage, and groundwater recharge, we'll explore innovative solutions that improve water availability and quality.

The discussion will aim to inspire action, share best practices, and foster collaboration across industries, policymakers, and researchers for a more sustainable water future.

Moderator: **Aleš Musar**, First Gentlemen of the Republic of Slovenia

Panelists:

Gonzalo Meschengieser, CEO, Argentine Chamber of Water (CAA), Argentina

Nataša Sovič, Director of State of the Environment Office, Slovenian Environment Agency, Slovenia

Dalibor Zdraveski, Director, Fluid Projekt, North Macedonia

Sabina Blatnik, Director, Nanoten, Slovenia

Yeun Hong, Kyowon Property, South Korea

Roland Wissekerke, CEO / Co-Founder, HuProTec, Switzerland

Takuzo Aida, Group Director, Emergent Soft Matter Function Research Group, RIKEN Center for Emergent Matter Science, Japan

Sarper Sarp, Senior Expert, Saudi Water Authority, Saudi Arabia

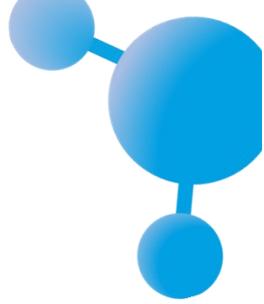
Tania Pentcheva, Director, Europe Government and Industry Relations, Xylem, Belgium

Henrique Gustavo da Costa, Director of Water Business Unit, Iskraemeco, Slovenia

13:15 – 15:00 Lunch

15:00 – 16:15 **PANEL 3: What is the specific impact on human health of pollutants and the use of technological solutions?**

This panel aims to clearly define, in collaboration with experts, how modern pollutants impact the human body. Building on the insights from the previous two panels, the discussion will ensure that key messages have been effectively communicated and



understood - framing these insights as actionable solutions to improve quality of life and support a more sustainable circular and blue economy.

Moderator: **Marko Maver**, Environmental Policy and Law Expert

Panelists:

Mari Asami, Chief Senior Researcher, National Institute of Public Health, Japan

Gonzalo Meschengieser, CEO, Argentine Chamber of Water (CAA), Argentina

Evgen Benedik, RD Clinical and Research Dietitian, Division of Pediatrics, University Medical Centre Ljubljana and Biotechnical faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Draženka Stipaničev, Head of Central Water Laboratory, Josip Juraj Strossmayer Water Institute, Croatia

Boštjan Križanec, Acting principal of the Centre, National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food, Slovenia

Helmut Burtscher-Schaden, Environmental Chemist, GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth, Austria

16:15 – 17:00

PANEL 4: Returning to Nature Responsibly

This panel will provide a comprehensive discussion on current challenges and future directions in the fields of municipal infrastructure, water protection and environmental monitoring. The good practice of the Bled wastewater treatment plant will be used as a case study to present the technology of operation, monitoring, evidence of treatment effectiveness, and addressing seasonal loads. The municipality will present its current and planned measures, the level of coverage of agglomerations with adequate infrastructure, and its vision for the development of water resources protection and conservation. Attention will also be paid to the monitoring of the ecological status of the Slovenian sea, the implementation of marine monitoring, and the importance of cooperation with local communities in measures to preserve the marine environment.

Moderator: **Matjaž Berčon**, Director, Komunala Kranj

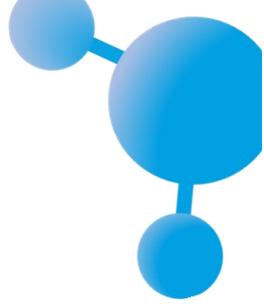
Panelists:

Anže Bizjak, Director of WTE, operator of the Bled Wastewater Treatment Plant

Anton Mežan, Mayor of the Municipality of Bled or another representative

Janja France, Senior Research Fellow, Marine Biological Station Pira - National Institute of Biology

The panel discussion will be held in the Slovenian language without translation.



Thursday, 5 June 2025: GLOBAL WATER STANDARDS

9:00 – 10:15 **PANEL 5: The Premium Water Illusion - Cutting Through the Hype**

In a world filled with bold claims and glossy packaging, this panel cuts through the noise to spotlight what truly defines premium drinking water. With a focus on new quality standards, global market requirements, and the role of water in everyday life—from homes to hospitality—we'll explore how to identify and elevate the best waters worldwide.

The discussion will introduce four new categories for better consumer understanding, delve into international certification standards like BWF and Aquinity8, and highlight innovative solutions aimed at reshaping the water industry. The goal: to promote global awareness, ensure purity, and redefine what premium drinking water truly means.

Moderator: **Milin Patel**, BWF Advisor

5-minute presentation: **Tadeja Volaušek**, CEO, General, Slovenia

Panelists:

Boštjan Oblak, Co-founder, Aquinity8, Slovenia

Marko Gajić, Founder, European Water Sommelier Association, Slovenia

Haneul Kim, Vice President, Korean International Sommelier Association, South Korea

Sam Wu, Managing Director, The Water Sommelier, Singapore

Anna Losse CEO Sorgente Sant'Elena, Italy

Benoit Szymanski, Sales Manager, la Sasse – Megève, France

10:15 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 11:45 **PANEL 6: Global Water Trends in Everyday Life and Gastronomy - The Future of Drinking Water and Water Menu**

This panel explores cutting-edge global developments in the distribution of drinking water to homes, hotels, and restaurants, showcasing breakthrough practices that set new industry standards.

By championing zero- and low-contaminant solutions that go beyond regulation, we're shaping the future of potable water. Through innovation, knowledge sharing, and smarter distribution, the goal is clear: to ensure clean, high-quality water reaches every corner of daily life—across households, hospitality, and industry worldwide.

Moderator: **Milin Patel**, BWF Advisor

Panelists:

Boštjan Oblak, Co-founder, Aquinity8, Slovenia

Marko Gajić, Founder, European Water Sommelier Association, Slovenia

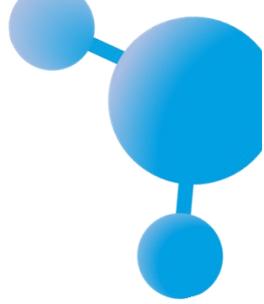
Danijel Galjot, F&B manager, Hotel Triglav Bled, Slovenia (Michelin recommended restaurant)

Elisabetta Neri, Owner, NEBE Inspiring Club Events, Italy

Iztok Altbauer, Former Managing Director, Slovenian Spas Association, Slovenia

Silvia Stefanuca-Serban, Fine Drinks Expert, Divina Sips, Romania

Ruriko Suzuki, Director, Japan Aqua Sommelier Association, Japan



11:50 – 12:20 **LECTURE: East and West: Philosophies of Water and Its Everyday Uses**
Jaeyoun Ko, President, Korean International Sommelier Association, South Korea

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch

15:00 – 16:00 **European Water Awards award ceremony**

Presentation of the projects that have been shortlisted for the prize (3 projects)
Award ceremony

16:00 – 18:00 **International Water Tasting and Water Cocktails**

Under the aegis of European Water Sommelier Association and powered by Aquinity8

Presentation and testing of waters and water cocktails according to new global trends in understanding water.