The Arno Water Resilience Lab - A collective action for freshwater stewardship

Kering Group, Etifor - Valuing Nature

Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum 2026 · 29 September – 2 October · La Nuvola, Rome

KEY INFORMATION

Date	*30 September 2026*
Time	*9:30-11:00*
Room	*Rodano*
Format	*Panel session*
Language(s)	*English (with potential closing remarks in Italian)*

SUMMARY

The purpose of the panel is to present the Arno Water Resilience Lab, an innovative cross-sector platform addressing the river basin's vulnerability to droughts, floods, and pollution through a nexus approach. Bringing together public authorities, industry, science, and finance, the session explores how basin-wide collective action can build long-term water resilience for one of Italy's most economically vital regions.

AGENDA & SPEAKERS

Time	Speaker Name & Title	Organization	Role / Topic
[hh:mm]	*Maria Spena, President*	*One Water Committee*	*Moderator*
[hh:mm]	*Marco Rago, Special Envoy for Water*	*Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs*	*Panelist*
[hh:mm]	*Rachel Kolbe Semhoun, Head of Sustainable Sourcing & Nature Initiatives*	*Kering*	*Panelist*
[hh:mm]	*Alessandro Leonardi, CEO*	*Etifor*	*Panelist*
[hh:mm]	*Gaia Checcucci, Secretary General*	*Basin Authority of Northern Apennines*	*Panelist*
	Eugenio Giani, President	*Tuscany Region*	*Speaker*

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The Arno River basin is a vital economic hub hosting key manufacturing sectors, agriculture, tourism, and significant luxury supply chains. However, the region faces growing systemic vulnerabilities driven by climate change, including severe droughts, frequent flooding, water pollution, and ecosystem degradation. In recent years, these extreme climate events highlighted the need to address, collectively, challenges that affect all sectors, both public and private.

Building from efforts already underway and to further address these challenges through coordinated action, Kering and Conservation International, in collaboration with Etifor and the University of Florence, initiated the

Arno Water Resilience Lab in Autumn 2025. The Lab operates as a cross-sector platform designed to establish a shared framework for science, policy, and funding across private enterprises, regional and local authorities, the scientific community, and local populations. Built on a basin-wide model that integrates science-based prioritization, cross-sector governance, targeted investments, and a shared strategic roadmap, the initiative demonstrates how long-term climate resilience requires restoring the natural health of the entire watershed beyond individual facilities' efforts and coordinating financing so that water-related investments add up to resilience.

By co-financing green and blue infrastructure alongside Nature-based Solutions (NbS) the Lab combines ecological restoration with industrial water efficiency and infrastructure innovation. This holistic approach directly mitigates downstream flood risks and pollution in the basin's most economically active zones. Common science-based measurements will provide a common appreciation of accumulative positive impacts on water quality, water quantity, and risk mitigation. Ultimately, the Arno Water Resilience Lab serves as the connective tissue uniting diverse public and private stakeholders to enhance natural water infiltration, protect local communities, and build a climate-resilient economy for the entire Arno region.

On this occasion, the Lab will be presented in partnership with the Northern Apennines District Basin Authority, one of the territory's most prominent public stakeholders, with whom the Lab is working to enhance public-private synergies. Presenting the Arno Lab at the Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum lays the groundwork for demonstrating and strengthening institutional collaboration and creates a replicable model for further deployment at national, European, and international levels.

OBJECTIVES

*Objective 1 - **Reinforce institutional credibility and legitimation** - strengthen the Lab's strategic legitimacy by demonstrating robust alignment between public administration goals, scientific rigor, and private sector commitments.*

*Objective 2 - **Expanded partnership network:** engagement of new private and public stakeholders to scale up the Lab's project pipeline and funding opportunities.*

TARGET AUDIENCE

- *Policy makers and financing institutions*
- *Utilities*
- *Sectorial associations representatives*

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. ***Institutional recognition:** position the Arno Lab as a key cross-sector platform at both national and European levels.*
2. ***International scalability:** promote the Lab as a flagship, scalable initiative to be replicated globally.*
3. *Engagement of new institutional and public high-level stakeholders;*
4. *New potential partnership to scale up Lab's project pipeline;*