

ONE IN EIGHT WATERWAYS CONTAMINATED: “RAINWATER MANAGEMENT IS A PRIORITY”

During the opening day of Accadueo, the international trade event dedicated to water services held from October 7 to 9 at BolognaFiere, operators and institutions will discuss water management in our cities, which are increasingly affected by extreme weather events.

Bologna, June 25, 2025 - In Italy, approximately one in eight waterways is affected by uncontrolled discharges due to water runoff in cities and the malfunctioning of sewer systems during extreme weather events (Source: REF Ricerche, Position Paper No. 279). This rapidly growing phenomenon is the result of fragmented rainwater management and increasingly impermeable land and will be the focus of a series of meetings and conferences organized on the opening day of Accadueo, the leading international event for the water sector organized by BolognaFiere Water& Energy (BFWE), scheduled for October 7-9, 2025, with over 150 brands already confirmed. In an urban context where over 90% of rainwater flows on the surface without infiltrating the soil (Source: REF Ricerche, Position Paper no. 279), the risk of flooding, pollution, and environmental damage is a constant threat to the safety of Italian cities.

*“We are facing one of the most concrete and least visible environmental emergencies of our time,” - says **Paolo Angelini, CEO of BolognaFiere Water&Energy**. - “The impact of rainwater on the quality of our rivers, canals, and reservoirs is now systemic, and a clear change is needed that involves an integrated and shared approach between operators and institutions. Accadueo will also be a key event for discussing the implementation of European Directive 2024/3019, which represents an opportunity to develop the Integrated Water Service into a central player in urban drainage management as well.”*

According to data collected in recent years, first flush rainwater, which quickly flows into reservoirs or waterways, carries high concentrations of contaminants such as microplastics, hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and pathogens (Source: REF Ricerche, Position Paper No. 279). Every extreme event places an increasing burden on sewerage systems, which too often lack adequate spillways or first flush tanks, with direct repercussions on the quality of surface and groundwater.

During the opening day of Accadueo 2025, there will be a series of technical workshops and round tables on key strategic issues, organized in collaboration with representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security and AneA Association: the integration of sewerage and urban drainage, the responsibilities of water service operators, and the opportunities offered by so-called Nature-Based Solutions – such as green roofs, infiltration areas, and ‘sponge city’ systems. These solutions, which have already been successfully tested in several European cities, represent a sustainable and effective alternative to traditional gray systems, reducing the impact of extreme events and promoting groundwater recharge (Source: EEA, 2025).

The introduction of a tariff component dedicated to stormwater management, based on the model already in place in Germany and the United Kingdom, will be one of the most debated topics. This is a fundamental measure to ensure economic sustainability and long-term planning, overcoming the emergency logic that has so far held back the sector.



BFWE is a joint venture founded in 2021 by BolognaFiere and Mirumir with the aim of developing a business project that contributes to the knowledge and sharing of issues related to the economic and social value of water and related new technological applications (<https://www.bfwe.it>). BFWE manages Accadueo, an event that has been the benchmark for the water sector at national and international level for over 30 years (<https://www.accadueo.com>). It takes place in Bari in even-numbered years and in Bologna in odd-numbered years.

For further information and organizational support Mirumir: info@mirumir.it www.bfwe.it

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