

Right 2 Water in Drinking Water Directive

Tomorrow in Strasbourg, the European Parliament will vote on the revised Drinking Water Directive.

This vote - the culmination of over 10 months of intensive negotiations - will set the Parliament's position on this piece of cornerstone EU environmental and public health legislation.

MEPs voting tomorrow will make decisions on important issues including the measures Member States will have to take to ensure the safety and quality of drinking water. It's right that after twenty years these measures are revisited to ensure that citizens across the EU know that when they turn on the tap, their glass of water is safe to drink.

However, what of those without a tap to turn on; those without access to clean, safe drinking water in the EU today?

Tomorrow MEPs must also decide their stance on the Right 2 Water European Citizens Initiative: a petition signed by over 1.8 million EU citizens, calling on the EU institutions to formally recognise access to drinking water as a basic human right.

The European Parliament, when voting on a previous report, welcomed this petition and its call for a meaningful right to water.

Three years later the European Commission has responded to this European Citizens Initiative (the first time in its history it has done so in proposed legislation). The Commission's proposal includes a list of mandatory measures Member States must take to improve universal access to water across the EU, with specific protections in place for vulnerable and marginalised populations such as refugees, homeless people and Roma communities.

With such important legislation now on the table and ahead of tomorrow's vote we call on our fellow MEPs to adopt a strong and ambitious position on the right to water.

Specifically we will vote tomorrow in Plenary in support of amendments that will do this; amendments which were narrowly defeated in favour of the EPP Rapporteur's more conservative position at Committee. Adopting these amendments will show that the European Parliament takes the views of citizens seriously and that we believe it is not acceptable for people in the EU not to have access to safe, clean drinking water.

The Parliament should at least match the ambition of the European Commission on this. The European Parliament should not be watering down measures that would help lead towards a meaningful right to water in EU law, with clear requirements for Member States to act. We believe that every citizen has a right to clean, safe drinking water.

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