# EPSU and Europe's Roma communities demand Commission act on Right to water

(16 May 2017) EPSU and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) have asked the European Commission to act on demands of the European Citizens' Initiative Right2Water. This was Europe's first successful European Citizens' Initiative. A new ERRC study 'Thirsting for Justice – Europe's Roma Denied Access to Clean Water and Sanitation' confirms that Roma are denied access to water and sanitation. The new study is based on research conducted between 2014 and 2016. It shows the disparities between Roma and non-Roma communities. The recommendations of the report ask the Commission to act. They are endorsed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation.

The report authors call on the European Commission to implement the UN's agreement on the human right to water, which was affirmed by the first successful European Citizen's Initiative and also endorsed by the European Parliament in 2015. EPSU and the ERRC demand the European Commission to come forward with legislation to implement this human rights in the EU, thus contributing to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU.

Large numbers of Europe's Roma continue to be denied or disadvantaged in their access to safe drinking water and sanitation. And this is true also for states and regions where safe water supply and sanitation services are available to almost every non Roma household.  Roma populations are often systemically discriminated in their access to these essential services.

Distant water resources present a major risk to public health from insufficient sanitation. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), when the water source is more than one kilometer away from the home, not only is the volume of water collected likely to be very low; but basic consumption and hygiene practices are compromised to an extent that the risk to public health from poor hygiene becomes very high. Distant public pumps or fire hydrants, which are the only source of water for many Roma, are often managed by reluctant and hostile authorities, who frequently cut them off as soon as they find that Roma are using them.

For the report :

EPSU

ERRC

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