# Urgent to make progress to implement Right2Water in EU says EPSU to Commission

(28 June 2017) The European Citizens' Initiative Right2Water was the first ever ECI to collect nearly 2 million signatures. Its key demand to implement the human right to water and sanitation of the UN into EU legislation has not moved forward though. This despite broad support in the European Parliament and the candidates for the Presidency of the EU Commission in 2014. A delegation of EPSU met with European Commissioner for the Environment and responsible for water Karmenu Vella to urge the Commission to make concrete proposals.

**European Commissioner Karmenu Vella** stated "**We take the demands of Europe's citizens as expressed in this successful ECI very serious. We will continue our discussion with you to make progress.**" He outlined current work being carried out by the Commission in water. This includes the review of the Drinking Water Directive and the forthcoming reviews of the Urban Waste Water and Water Framework Directives. "**Making sure that all people have access to water and sanitation services that are of high quality, safe, efficient, affordable and sustainable are key for us**" he added. EPSU referred to the ongoing struggles in many countries in the EU to realise the right to water.

The EPSU representatives and the Commissioner further considered the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals for the EU itself and for developing countries. There are many people that do not have access to drinking water and sanitation services whereas we know that such services are key for growth, jobs, health and gender equality for example. The EU can assist countries such as China and in Africa with expertise. The EPSU delegation stressed the importance of promoting public- public partnerships and continuing successful initiatives like the ACP EU Water Facility for such cooperation in which public companies from the EU assist public companies in the Global South with their expertise. Promoting the right to water in the EU's development policy was one of the key demands of the ECI Right2Water. The Commissioner and the union group reflected on the strategic role of cities in sustainable development and promoting green jobs. Transition and transformation take place in many larger and smaller cities and also here water and

sanitation services play crucial roles. The Commission is promoting such transition and transformation through the Green Cities initiatives. The Green Leaf award recognizes cities and towns that promote green growth and new jobs.

The meeting took place 22 June 2017, Brussels. EPSU was represented by its President Isolde Kunkel-Weber, the EPSU General Secretary and EPSU policy staff for communication and campaigns.

> With @EPSUnions today discussing #Water #SDGs #GreenJobs A very good start to a conversation that will continue within #EU & globally. pic.twitter.com/lEOhzQMm8e
>
> — Karmenu Vella (@KarmenuVella) June 22, 2017

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