

World Water Day 2018 still fighting for Human Right to Water



(22 March 2018) Today is World Water Day. Four years ago we completed the first ever successful European Citizens Initiative for the Human Right to water. Then a new and untested campaign tool, our ECI secured nearly double the minimum number of signatures required, reaching a total 1,884,790 supporters by the time it was submitted in December 2013.

(more languages below)

This February the European Commission published the Re-cast of the Drinking Water Directive. We have been waiting four years for this first concrete outcome of the ECI, following the Commission's unambitious Communication in 2014. The proposed Directive, as we said at the time, is a step forward but misses the opportunity to recognize the Human Right to Water. Now we have to mobilise our allies in the European Parliament, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions to push the European Union to commit to really implementing the Human Right to Water.

Water is a human right according to the United Nations, which in 2010 declared that every man, woman and child should have access to clean drinking water and safe sanitation. As the most precious life source the earth has to offer, without which humans cannot survive, the recognition of water's importance to human beings as equal to their right to life and dignity goes without saying.

Since 2008, the European financial and economic crisis has seen poverty levels and the number of low income families soar, and an increasing number of people struggle to pay their water bills. Austerity policies pursued by European leaders in the wake of the crisis have seen the mass sell-off of state assets and handed many vital public services to private providers, which has in turn increased costs for citizens and their families. For many who can't pay, their water supply can be cut off entirely. This is still very much a reality for millions of Europeans and so we need to ensure that the Human Right to Water is properly enshrined in European of legislation.

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