

## **Public Consultation on drinking water directive is open**

(12 August 2014) In response to our European Citizens' Initiative the European Commission said it would start a public consultation on the drinking water directive in view of improving access to quality water in the EU. This consultation is open now. We would like to encourage everybody who has signed our ECI to participate in this consultation and respond to the questionnaire.

The Consultation is online and it you can respond to it until 23 September. It consists in a [questionnaire](#) that is available in all EU languages

The focus is on 'quality of water' and it aims to increase transparency in the water sector. It only partly answers to the demands we made in our ECI. Nevertheless it is a step ahead to improve quality water services in the EU, so we hope that especially people that are lacking a good and affordable water service and people that are not satisfied with their water provider will use this opportunity to answer to the questionnaire.

We expect that for many questions the answer is "don't know". Please don't feel embarrassed to answer "don't know", because it helps to identify whether information to the public needs to be improved. At the end of the questionnaire there is a space for comments. We recommend to use this space to comment that water is a public good, not a commodity. The approach of the Commission is still a market approach: confusing affordability with value for money. The Commission should acknowledge that from the human right to water it follows that water supply is a government obligation; to the entire population in a country. This obligation cannot be left to the market as there is only ONE (acceptable) quality drinking water and ONE supplier of drinking water in a river basin area.

Privatisation does not lead to better quality water services, nor does it help to improve affordability or accessibility. Many examples show the adverse effects of privatisation of water. The Commission wants to remain neutral and we fully support a neutral position. However, this must be really neutral. We have seen how

the Commission has supported public-private partnerships that are a privatisation in disguise.

We have seen the Commission putting pressure on the Greek government to privatise water. So we would like to see the Commission to refrain in writing and in legislation from liberalising water services, knowing that liberalising (opening a market) is the first step to privatisation. We also want the Commission to exclude water services from trade negotiations such as TTIP and TISA. Again: water is a public good, not a commodity.

There can be NO trade in water or water services! What the European Commission can do, is legislate that governments must fulfil their duty and impose sanctions in case of non-compliance to their obligation to ensure good quality and affordable water for all! It is also a government obligation to protect water sources to ensure good quality drinking water, for now and for the future. Water must therefore remain under public control.

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