

## **Fighting for public water: peer reviewed analysis of Right2Water European Citizens' Initiative**

(18 July 2017) The first ever successful European Citizens' Initiative Right to Water and Sanitation continues to draw attention of researchers and others. A recent paper based on extensive interviews and research was published by the Journal Interface dealing with the analysis of social movements. It was first presented to a meeting of the [European Trade Union Institute](#). [Andreas Bieler](#), Professor of Political Economy at the University of Nottingham (UK), places the ECI firmly in the context of ongoing water struggles. Water activists, social movements, unions and others seek to prevent privatization of water, fight to bring water back in public ownership and explore new ways of public water management. Professor Bieler sees three factors for success of the ECI: 1) the long history of water struggles; 2) the unique quality of water; and 3) the broad alliance of participating actors. He uses a historical materialist approach to social movement struggles. He assesses the impact of the ECI on EU policy-making. Finally, the research paper reflects on the wider lessons to be learned for the struggle against neo-liberal restructuring. Professor Bieler argues that a combined focus on the commons as well as new forms of participatory democracy may provide the basis for a broader transformative project.

The article provides a good insight into the long history of trade unions and EPSU fighting for public water and the human right to water. The ECI did not come out of thin air and was a bringing together of many local and national struggles. This fight continues to this day in Europe and globally. Workers in Thessaloniki and Athens are opposing the privatization of the water companies imposed by the Troika Memorandum of Understanding on Greece for example

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