

Press release: World Water Day 2013: First successful European Citizens Initiative puts Right to water on EU agenda

(22 March 2013) Hundreds of activists will be collecting signatures for the right to water European Citizens Initiative in many countries in the EU on the occasion of World Water Day. More than 1 million citizens have already signed. The right2water initiative demands that water and sanitation are declared a human right in the EU. Campaigners across the world will also be participating in the “International Year of Water Cooperation”, demanding that the human right to water and sanitation is guaranteed in their countries.

Action is needed to ensure it is implemented so that the hundreds of millions who lack access to these services can enjoy safe and clean drinking water and effective sanitation. The right2water initiative also expresses its opposition to EU liberalization of water and sanitation services. Many citizens who have signed up are expressing their anger over continued attempts to privatise water services in their communities, cities and countries. The right2water initiative has opened a real public debate about the management of water services, how public services are run and what kind of role the EU has in this area. The people of Europe are sending a strong signal to EU politicians.

With over 1,3 million signatures supporting the ECI, this year’s World Water Day is a celebration of the involvement, participation and activism of EU citizens. Their message to say “Our water is not for Sale” is about putting democracy before corporate interests. Five countries have already passed the minimum threshold required by the ECI regulations (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Slovakia and Slovenia). Several other countries are close to the minimum, including Finland, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Cyprus, Greece. In the week leading up to World Water Day hundreds of activities are taking place across the EU. Union members, activists of other supporting groups and many citizens are collecting signatures and discussing the importance of the initiative.

We thank everyone for their contribution. We can be confident that the initiative will be a success with continued mobilisation in countries like Italy, Spain and many others. And furthermore, many local authorities have adopted cross-party resolutions to support the right2water initiative.

Public Services International, the global arm of Europe's public service trade unions, coordinates actions across the world and together with many other organisations have been urging that water and sanitation are part of the so-called global commons and need to be run for the common good. Privatisation of water services is widely seen as a threat to the human right to water. And across the EU local and national groups are standing up to defend their water services against privatisation. On this year's World Water Day we pay tribute to their struggle. [For more information on the [European Citizens Initiative](#)

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