



**Ms Ursula von der Leyen,  
President European Commission**

Björn Seibert, Head of Cabinet  
[bjoern.seibert@ec.europa.eu](mailto:bjoern.seibert@ec.europa.eu)

Ref. JWG/TB/cb

Brussels, 30 January 2024

Dear President von der Leyen,

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions, the representative trade union federation for workers in the water and wastewater sector. EPSU also led the first successful ECI campaign on the right2water.

We therefore welcome the efforts of the European Commission to make water a top priority in 2024. For example, with the Water Resilience Initiative you announced in your 2023 State of the Union Speech, and with the new minimum hygiene standards for materials and products that come into contact with drinking water published last week.

In the publication of the new hygiene rules last week, the European Commission argues that these new rules are responding to the ECI right2water. We like to clarify, however, that the Human Right to water is not a matter of only water quality. The [right to water](#) entitles everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water for personal and domestic use and the right to sanitation entitles everyone to have physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, that is safe, hygienic, secure, and socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity.

We hope the water resilience plan to be published in March will go further in addressing these issues. Water resilience also means qualified staff, enough resources, adequate investments, a focus on health and safety, as well as forest and river basin management.

Please could you tell us if you have already started the consultation procedure for this plan? As the trade union federation of workers in the sector and the lead campaigner of the right2water ECI, we represent the views of a number of key stakeholders.

We look forward to hearing your response and to contributing to the work of your services on these key issues.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Willem Goudriaan  
EPSU General Secretary

cc. Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries [cab-sinkevicius-contact@ec.europa.eu](mailto:cab-sinkevicius-contact@ec.europa.eu)

EPSU Secretariat 40 rue Joseph II, box 5 – 1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Phone: +32 2 250 10 80 Fax: +32 2 520 10 99 Mail: [epsu@epsu.org](mailto:epsu@epsu.org) [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)

European  
Federation  
of Public  
Service  
Unions

Federación  
Sindical  
Europea  
de Servicios  
Públicos

Fédération  
Syndicale  
Européenne  
des Services  
Publics

Europeiska  
Federationen  
för Offentlig-  
anställdas  
Förbund

Europäischer  
Gewerkschafts-  
verband für den  
Öffentlichen  
Dienst

Европейская  
Федерация  
Профсоюзов  
Общественного  
Осьпуживания



EPSU is a member  
federation of the ETUC  
and represents  
PSI in Europe