



European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) Press Release 24 October 2018

European Parliament votes to start dialogue on Drinking Water Directive. Time to implement the Human Right to water in European legislation!

(Press release 24 October 2018) Yesterday the European Parliament voted with a very slim majority to endorse the report of MEP Michel Dantin on the Drinking Water Directive (DWD). It is the first time that EU legislation takes into account a European Citizens' Initiative, in this case the Right2water.

The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), the backbone of the Right2water ECI, welcomes the fact that a majority of MEPs supported a mandate for the Human Right to water to be included in the DWD, thereby recognising the need for Member States to provide universal access for all in the European Union. This was a key demand of the ECI. We are disappointed, however, that a majority of the right-wing in the European Parliament put time and effort into watering down the demands of civil society.

The limited support that the text finally received (with the correction of some votes it will be under 300 MEPs) shows that the report could have better reflected the demands of civil society. We regret that the majority of the Parliament rejected a minimum supply of water for each citizen and the creation of a European water observatory. These would have led to real progress and transparency.

The positive steps that have been taken are thanks to an intense civil society mobilisation. Parliament now supports ensuring the free provision of water in public buildings. It discourages the use of bottled water. There is a provision on public fountains with the setting up and maintenance of outdoor and indoor equipment for access to water in public spaces. It is a major achievement that Parliament and the Commission propose that Member States improve the access to water for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU General Secretary and Right2water Vice-President states "*It really is a shame that a small majority of Parliament did not support calls for a clearer recognition and implementation of the Right2Water in EU legislation. We will continue to advocate for the Right2Water with Member States and demand progress in implementing the Human Right to water in EU legislation*".

We expect Member States to table proposals for the Right2Water during the dialogue. More than 1.8 million citizens across the European Union want to see this happen.

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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 260 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information please go to: www.epsu.org