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For immediate release

European Groups applaud Bern for becoming first Blue Community in Europe

Social justice, environmental, and labour organizations in Europe are applauding the city of Bern for taking a bold new step to protect water as a commons. Launched by the Blue Planet Project based in Canada, the Blue Communities certification requires municipal governments to pass legislation recognizing water as a human right and pledging to promote and protect public water and sanitation services.

Aqua Publica Europea, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), Food & Water Europe, Public Services International and the Transnational Institute are hoping this will lead to many more Blue Communities throughout the continent. Having collected almost 2 million signatures within the European Union demanding the human right to water and sanitation through the European Citizens Initiative, civil society and labour groups hope local governments will adopt this municipal initiative throughout Switzerland and Europe.

The Blue Communities Project states that, "because water is central to human activity, it must be governed by principles that allow for reasonable use, equal distribution and responsible treatment in order to preserve it for nature and future generations."

While a growing number of Canadian municipalities have become Blue Communities, Bern is the first city in Europe to receive a Blue Communities certificate. World-renowned author and water activist, Maude Barlow is in Bern to deliver the certificate to City Council during a ceremony to be held on September 18 at 9h00 at the Erlacherhof. Along with the city, the University of Bern and the Evangelisch-reformierte Kirchgemeinde Bern-Johannes Church have passed their own resolutions to become Blue Communities and will be receiving certificates.

To learn more about the Blue Communities Project, please visit:
http://www.canadians.org/bluecommunities