



To the Ministers of the Environment of the European Union

Brussels: 21/06/2018

Subject: Aqua Publica Europea urges the Member States to ensure access to water

Dear Environment Minister,

The European Commission has recently put forward its proposal for the Recast of the **Directive on the Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption**. This proposed Recast takes account of the demands of the first ever successful European Citizens Initiative (ECI) Right2water which collected nearly 1.9 million signatures.

As the European Association of Public Water Operators, we welcome the Commission's intention to give a positive answer to the ECI Right2Water. In particular, Article 13 is an important step towards the recognition of the human right to water as defined by the United Nations in 2010 by requiring Member States:

- to improve access to and promote use of drinking water via measures such as: assessing the share of people without access to drinking water, encouraging the use of tap water in public buildings and restaurants, informing citizens about water quality, ensuring that equipment to freely access tap water is available in public spaces.
- to take all measures necessary to improve access to drinking water for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Certainly, the Commission's proposal can be improved. Responsibilities for the implementation of article 13 need to be better defined and assigned. Distinguishing physical access from economic access is arguable, especially in light of the principle of cost recovery as established by the Water Framework Directive. More generally, the economic impact of the Commission's proposal needs to be carefully assessed in order to avoid the paradoxical effect that physical access is improved when economic one is reduced.

Despite these weaknesses, the members of Aqua Publica Europea remain convinced that the Commission's proposal is needed response to the citizens' expectations as expressed in the ECI Right2Water, supports the effort to reduce plastic consumption and promotes a circular economy.

With the Recast of the Drinking Water Directive on the agenda of the Environment Council on 25 June, we urge you to support the European Commission's proposal, including the provisions in article 13, and thus express your commitment to an improved access to safe drinking water for all citizens as well as for increased trust in tap water.

Yours Sincerely,

Milo Fiasconaro, Executive Director

ABOUT AQUA PUBLICA EUROPEA

Aqua Publica Europea (APE) is the European Association of Public Water Operators.

It unites publicly owned water and sanitation services and other stakeholders working to promote public water management at both European and international level.

APE is an operator-led association that looks for efficient solutions that serve the public rather than corporate interests.