



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
OF PUBLIC WATER OPERATORS  
10 YEARS OF COLLABORATION  
FOR THE GENERAL INTEREST

## PRESS RELEASE

### DRINKING WATER: EU MINISTERS FINALLY MOVE FORWARD ON THE LEGISLATION BUT MORE AMBITION NEEDED IN INTERINSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

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*Today, the EU Environment Ministers have adopted their position on the Drinking Water Directive to secure access to safe drinking water in Europe. Public water operators welcome this step forward but hope for more ambition before the final legislative adoption.*

**Brussels, 5 March 2019** – Aqua Publica Europea, the European Association of Public Water Operators, welcomes the **adoption of the Council’s general approach on the Drinking Water Directive as a crucial step towards the final adoption of the text** and congratulates the Romanian Presidency for its commitments to advance this important issue.

Public water operators emphasise that the **Ministers’ position improves the Commission’s proposal by adequately addressing some of the original shortcomings**, notably on setting a risk-based approach. Beyond, the Council has confirmed the legislation’s ambition to **improve access to water for all**, through key requirements and the support to consumption of tap water as drinking water. The obligation for Member States to report on measures taken further strengthens the text by setting national accountability for the improved access to water.

Such measures are **necessary to enable public water operators in fulfilling their public service mission**, providing citizens with clean drinking water and promoting tap water, the more affordable and environmentally-friendly option. This is also why we regret the Council’s weakening of the Commission’s proposal on the provision of **free tap water in restaurants**.

However, the **Council’s position regrettably fails to adequately reflect transparency expectations**. In the type of information that water suppliers are required to publish, Ministers have chosen to keep energy consumption, an element deeply dependent on geographical location and therefore incomparable between Member States. Beyond, they **deleted requirements to inform the public on the governance of their water services**, which is linked to management and use of economic resources and therefore essential in a transparent relation to citizens and users.

Above all, with the adoption of this position, institutions will now be able to launch ‘trilogue’ negotiations towards the adoption of a final legislation that will effectively secure access to safe water in Europe and foster citizens’ trust in their tap water. **We therefore call the institutions to remain ambitious in their discussions, for the benefit of all Europeans, and to adopt the Drinking Water Directive swiftly.**

*Aqua Publica Europea is the European Association of Public Water Operators. For the past ten years, it has united publicly owned water and sanitation services and other stakeholders working to promote public water management at European and international levels. Aqua Publica gathers over 60 members serving more than 70 million people, in an operator-led association that looks for efficient solutions that serve the public rather than corporate interests.*

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