



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
OF PUBLIC WATER OPERATORS

## WORLD WATER DAY 2022: Critical supply of water must be ensured in Ukraine

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*22 March 2022*

On the occasion of World Water Day 2022, the Management Board of Aqua Publica Europea, the European Association of Public Water Operators, stresses the critical importance of continued access to water and sanitation services as basic human rights and calls for water facilities to be shielded from the conflict unfolding in Ukraine.

It is with great sadness and concern that we witness the devastation currently taking place in Ukraine and the deliberate damaging of infrastructure essential to life, which is causing a humanitarian and health crisis, putting lives at risk, forcing displacement and provoking long-lasting environmental harm.

We call on the Russian government to halt immediately the indiscriminate attack against the civilian population and recall the international principles and conventions – which Russia is also party to - that safeguard access to critical water services.

- The General Assembly of the United Nations recognises the Human right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation (Resolution A/RES/64/292, July 2010).
- The Protocol Additional I to the Geneva Conventions on the protection of victims of international armed conflicts prohibits attack, destruction, removal or rendering useless of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, including drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works (Protocol I, article 54, 8 June 1977).

The destruction of infrastructure is not only an immediate disaster; it will also imply significant reconstruction efforts in the post-war period. Local utilities will have an important role and the members of Aqua Publica Europea will stay ready to provide technical support to their peers to rebuild damaged infrastructure and ensure the continued the delivery of clean drinking water and basic sanitation.

### **About Aqua Publica Europea**

Aqua Publica Europea (APE) is the European Association of Public Water Operators. It unites 66 publicly owned utilities providing water and sanitation services to about 80 million people in 13 European countries, 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.