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Review of the drinking water directive

Brussels (Belgium), 01.02.2018



Most people living in the EU enjoy very good access to high quality drinking water. Almost 100 % of drinking water is safe to drink across the EU.

The European Commission adopted on 1 February 2018 a proposal for a revised drinking water directive (COM(2017) 753 final) to improve even more the quality of drinking water and provide greater access and

information to citizens.

The basic drinking water directive is Council Directive 98/83/EC of 3 November 1998 on the quality of drinking water intended for human consumption. Its objective is to protect human health from adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean.

The Directive laid down the essential quality standards at EU level. A total of 48 microbiological, chemical and indicator parameters must be monitored and tested regularly.

Member states can raise but not lower the standards set in the Drinking Water Directive.

The Directive also requires providing regular information to consumers. In addition, drinking water quality has to be reported to the European Commission every three years.

Some of the main elements included in the proposal for a review of the drinking water directive are:

- The proposal updates existing safety standards in line with latest recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and ensure drinking water is safe to use for the decades to come.
- It will empower authorities to better deal with risks to water supply and engage with polluters.
- It contributes to the transition to a circular economy. It will help EU countries to manage drinking water in a resource-efficient and sustainable manner so as to reduce energy use and unnecessary water loss. It will also help reduce the number of plastic bottles following increased confidence in tap water, improved access and promotion of use of drinking water.

The proposal will be transmitted to the European Parliament and EU Council for negotiation and adoption before it becomes applicable.

EurEau



EurEau, which is the voice of Europe's drinking water and waste water service operators, phrased some remarks.

It welcomes the initiative and the move to further protect the citizens' health and the environment, but indicates that questions remain.

Why for example the discrepancy between WHO recommendations to include and/or delete quality parameters and the Commission's proposals?

EurEau will assess the Commission's reasoning as well as the technological feasibility and financial implications.

Water is a human right and must be available, physically accessible, affordable, acceptable, safe and of excellent quality.

The position of Eurofedop



The European Union was considering to introduce respectively reinforce private enterprise in the management of water resources and water wastes, Eurofedop expressed its position on water and the need for ensuring water provision, on 22nd March, the day that each year the World Water Day is celebrated.

Eurofedop strongly underlined that water is a common good and, therefore, projects aiming at the privatisation of water management should be avoided if not wholly excluded. In the first place, the supply of water has to be ensured and this can be best accomplished by the State.

Eurofedop will continue to defend this point of view, in its relations with Members of the European Parliament, in particular within the framework of the MEP Water Group, where MEPs discuss the variety of topics linked with water and shaping the EU's water policy.