



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate C - Quality of Life, Water & Air
ENV.C.2 - Marine Environment & Water Industry
Head of Unit

Brussels,
ENV.C.2

Dear petitioner,

Thank you for your email dated 16 March 2016 "We need the human right to water now!" Commissioner Vella has asked me to respond on behalf of the Commission to your email.

The Commission reaffirms its position on the importance of the human rights dimension of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, as underlined in its Communication on the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) 'Right2Water'. All EU institutions and bodies must respect the rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and ensure that any measure taken on the basis of the Treaty is compatible with those rights. In particular, specific provisions in the EU Charter, such as Article 36 related to the access to services of general economic interest, Article 37 on Environmental Protection and Article 38 on Consumer protection can be interpreted as also being of direct relevance for access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation. In addition, other EU Charter provisions such the right to dignity (Article 1) or the right to life (Article 2) can also be relevant ensuring effective protection and promotion of fundamental rights.

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is of utmost importance to the Commission and we are committed to making the instrument work, so that it can achieve its full potential. The Commission recognises the importance of the ECI as a mechanism for promoting active participation of citizens in EU policy-making, and its potential to promote participatory democracy at the EU level.

The Commission also attaches great importance to actions to be taken in response to a successful ECI. As regards the "Right2Water" initiative, the Commission responded positively to the requests of the initiative, insofar it has powers to act under the Treaties and where this is in line with subsidiarity and proportionality principles. The evaluation of the Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC is an example of such a follow-up action.

As far as possible within the scope of its remit, a study will look into options assessing beyond drinking water quality issues also the management and the provision of drinking water. The Commission will consider follow-up of the results of the evaluation once it is concluded.

Yours sincerely,

Matjaž MALGAJ

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111