

PRESS RELEASE

AquaFed calls on EU Council to confirm the provisions on access to water and transparency in the revision of the Drinking Water Directive

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Access to water and sanitation has been recognised as a fundamental Human Right by the United Nations in 2010, and the SDG 6 is to achieve “Clean Water and Sanitation” for all by 2030. In February 2018, the European Commission published a proposal for a revision of the Drinking Water Directive, which redefines and completes its scope with a new article 13 on access to water and article 14 on transparency, in order to fulfil this Human Right, and improve the citizen trust in their water services. Last October, the European Parliament has approved these proposals.

AquaFed has been an early promoter of this Human Right, at both global and European level. We witnessed during the public consultation and preparatory meetings with various stakeholders organised by the Commission that there was a wide support to access and transparency, in line with the Right2Water European Citizen Initiative (which gathered nearly 2 million signatures).

Today, negotiations in the Council show that some Member States are calling for the deletion of the article on access, and the watering down of transparency requirements. Are these Member States trying to get away from international obligations at the expense of the most vulnerable populations and the good level of information provided to the users on the way their services are run?

Indeed, the Commission’s proposal, confirmed by the Parliament, is to increase the access to water by identifying people lacking a connection, in particular to invest in the necessary infrastructure. Likewise, the transparency criteria set by the United Nations is translated into Article 14 under which water operators shall provide up-to-date information on the quality of the drinking water, the governance, the cost structure, the details of the tariff, the price per litre or per cubic metre, the volume consumed by household, the water system efficiency (including leakage rates), the investments underway, or the number of complaints filed by customers.

This progress must be now confirmed by the EU Council in order to ensure that future generations of European citizens enjoy the best access to transparent and quality water services.

AquaFed

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About AquaFed

AquaFed is the international federation of private water operators. We bring together more than 300 water companies operating in more than 40 countries including European member states. Collectively our members serve around 100 million people in the EU. Over 1 billion people count on private operators to serve them on a daily basis. AquaFed and its members are strongly committed to provide continuously the best quality services to all its customers. We are a UN accredited body and are in the EU transparency register.