

Public hearing

RIGHT2WATER CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

17 February 2014, Brussels

PURPOSE

A public hearing on the first ever European citizens' initiative will be held by the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, in association with the Committee on Petitions, the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, and the Committee on Development.

The organisers of the 'Right2Water' initiative invite the European Commission to propose legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation as recognised by the United Nations, and promoting the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all. Following the reception of the initiative by the Commission on 20 December 2013, the European Parliament will hold a public hearing at which the organisers will present their 3 key goals: "guaranteed water and sanitation for all in the EU", "global access to water and sanitation for all" and "no liberalisation of water services". They will also answer questions asked by Members of the European Parliament.

The public hearing aims to provide a platform for debate with Members of the European Parliament, the organisers of the 'Right2Water' initiative and representatives from the European Commission.

A European citizens' initiative is an invitation to the European Commission to propose legislation on matters where the EU has competence to legislate. The Commission has three months from the initiative's official submission to inform the citizens on the steps it intends to take. 'Right2Water' is the very first successful European citizens' initiative since it was introduced in April 2012.

INSIDE

This leaflet provides extracts from documents prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department on "Economic and Scientific Policy" and on "External Policies" relevant to the topics of discussion of this hearing.

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NEWSLETTER

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PUBLICATIONS

The right to water and sanitation in development cooperation - November 2012



This briefing paper examines international development cooperation from the perspective of the right to water and sanitation. It focuses on the role of the European Union and asks where and how human rights approaches could be better integrated in its policy and practice. The paper assesses progress on realising the right to water and sanitation. It also analyses the degree of consensus on right to water and sanitation in international law and the extent to which it is reflected in development policy and practice. Different areas where human rights-based approaches could be integrated into the EU's external policies on water and sanitation and makes seven recommendations are also discussed.



Europe's water challenges – April 2012



This document contains a summary of the proceedings of the workshop on Europe's water challenges held together with experts on water-management and policy. One of the aims of the workshop was to provide an overview of the current situation in water availability and water quality in the Member States, following the adoption of the Water Framework Directive of 2000. It also provided the opportunity to discuss policy challenges in the European water situation with regards to climate change, energy, financing and nature protection. The workshop also reviewed the implementation, achievements, failures and gaps of EU water legislation.





Current state and future challenges of Europe's waters – March 2012



This study explains the current state of Europe's fresh waters and explores the challenges ahead. The state of water availability and quality are linked to climate change, energy, finance and nature protection. The current gaps and challenges are identified in terms of water efficiency, land-use, economic instruments, knowledge, governance, global aspects, and climate change. The study's key findings include: water availability is a mostly a local or regional issue, with water scarcity being highest in the South and in densely populated areas. Water quality in Europe is generally improving although the 'good' status targeted by Water Framework Directive has not yet been achieved.



A comparative evaluation of public-private and public-public partnerships for urban water services in ACP countries – May 2010



This study evaluates the comparative advantages of PPPs and PuPs in urban water services. Past performance of PPPs and PuPs is reviewed against several criteria. Lessons are then identified regarding the barriers and enablers which determine the success of partnerships, and the kind of support donors could usefully provide. The study concludes that while the main determinant of performance is not public or private management but policy, institutions, finance and regulation, there are notable differences between what PPPs and PuPs can offer. Governments should have a choice of different partnership options and the ability to end failing partnerships.



Water scarcity and droughts - February 2008



Water scarcity and droughts affect many parts of Europe and climate change is predicted to worsen existing problems in many regions. This study considers the economic effects of water scarcity and droughts, their effects on ecosystems and public health as well as the effects of climate change. It also gives an overview of water price policies in the Member States, the integration of this issue into other policy areas, the availability of information for strategic decision making, research and technology development related to efficient water use, the role of the EU institutions and the situation in neighbouring countries/areas.



Simplification of European water policies - April 2007



Over the past few years, extensive work has been done within the scope of the 'Better Regulation' Strategy to start and push forward a process of overall simplification of the regulatory environment in the EU. The water sector was one of the first environmental sectors that was reshaped in the context of the EU better governance activities. This study gives an overview of EU water policies, as well as the Water Framework Directive of 2000, which was meant to concentrate, rationalise, standardise and improve the efficiency of European water protection legislation. Further simplification options in this field of European policy are also identified.



POLICY DEPARTMENTS: WHO ARE WE?

Effective parliamentary work relies on specialised, objective, high-quality and up-to-date information. To this end, five units responsible for research, analysis and policy advice, known as policy departments, were created to provide this expert advice. Their activities cover all areas of competence of the European Parliament, producing high-level independent advice, based on research carried out either in-house or by external researchers.

Policy departments deliver a wide range of expertise, comprising texts as diverse as in-depth studies on complex legislative issues, comparative studies and short background briefings. These documents aim to support the work of the various parliamentary bodies. They serve a variety of purposes: they can feed directly into the legislative work of a specific committee or serve as a briefing for delegations of Members.

Apart from a few confidential documents, all texts produced by the policy departments are available on the Parliament's website for the benefit of all Members and the wider public.

All studies: www.europarl.europa.eu/studies



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