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Press release | 19.03.2014

# Right to water

## Response from Commission must be swiftly followed by concrete proposals

The European Commission today presented its response to first successful European citizens' initiative on the universal right to water (right2water) (1). The Greens called on the Commission to present concrete proposals in order to ensure the initiative will be truly delivered. Commenting on the communication, Green MEP **Gerald Häfner** stated:

*"While today is another important milestone in the development of EU democracy, we would have preferred a more ambitious response from the European Commission. This first official response from the Commission to a citizens' initiative is a vindication of the excellent work carried out by those involved in this crucial campaign on the universal right to access water, with the Commission recognising the importance of the issue. However, the Commission's response is vague and it must be swiftly followed-up with concrete proposals to ensure the objective of the Right2Water initiative will truly be delivered.*

*"The Commission has committed to ensure that all future EU activities contribute to the maintenance and improvement of water quality, upholding the necessary environmental standards, affordability of water supply and transparency in the award and exercise of appropriate services, both within the EU and internationally. However, the Commission's response remains remarkably vague and unsatisfactory in terms of potential changes in EU law. The Commission should have given a clear timeframe and commitment to ensure the forthcoming review of the Water Framework Directive delivers a substantive response towards guaranteeing the right to water. It should also have given an unequivocal commitment to refrain from pushing for the privatisation of water services, either directly or indirectly, as has been the case in the context of the Troika's involvement in crisis countries. The European public also has a right to more clarity on how the EU intends to ensure the protection of water supply in the course of EU-US trade negotiations (TTIP)."*

(1) The Right2Water campaign (www.right2water.eu) was the first successfully registered European citizens' initiative, collecting over 1.8 million signatures. Through the European citizens' initiative, a proposal with the support of at least one million EU citizens calling on the European Commission to initiative a legislative proposal must be given a response.

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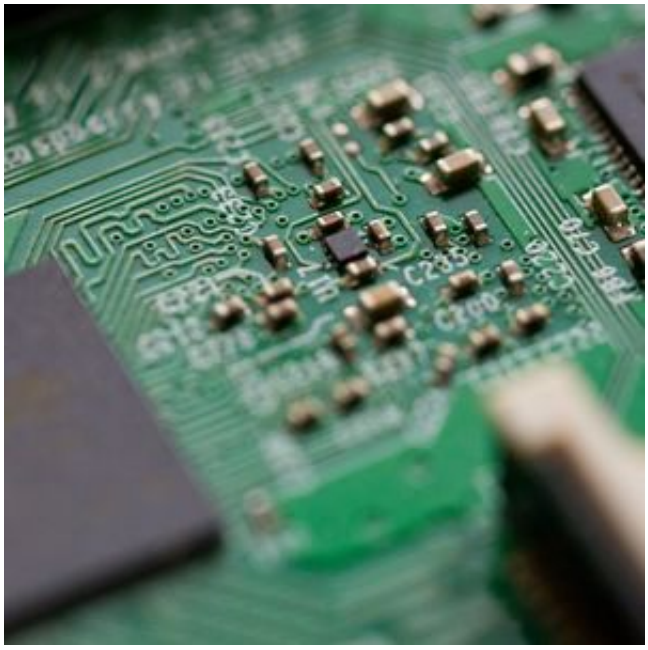


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