Press release | 04.09.2015

Water services and basic rights

Centre-right coalition seeks to slap down important Citizens' Initiative on Right to Water

The European Parliament will next week vote on a report setting out its response to the massively popular European Citizens' Initiative aimed at protecting the right to water (Right2Water). Parliament's environment and public health committee had adopted a strong report, which gave explicit support to the initiative and called on the Commission to follow-up, but a coalition of centre-right MEPs is seeking to completely water down the report. Commenting on the situation, Green MEP **Claude Turmes** said:

"This eleventh hour move by centre-right MEPs to water down the EP report and undermine support for the hugely popular citizens' initiative on the right to water is a scandal. Faced with the ongoing threats to water services in Europe, the EU institutions should be defending citizens' basic rights as regards the provision of this fundamental service. Instead, the opposite seems to be happening.

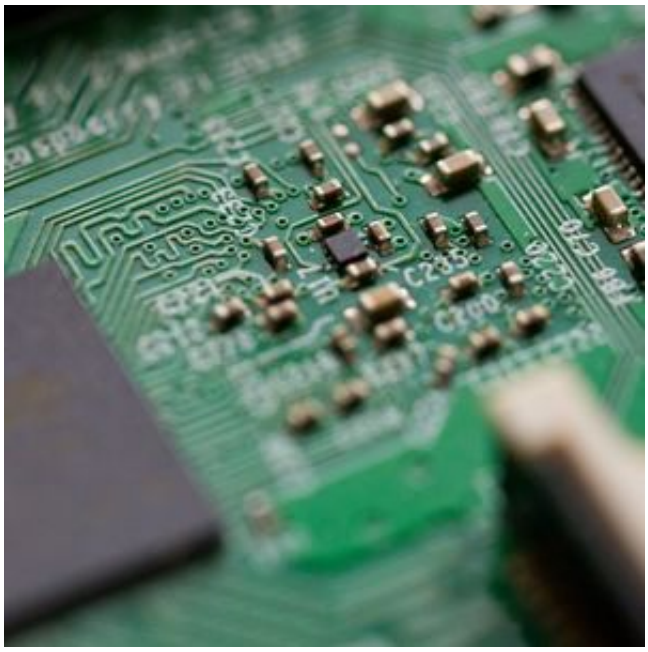
"The initiative called for the Commission to legislate to ensure the UN-established human right to water is enshrined in EU law, as well as excluding water services from any trade negotiations (including ongoing negotiations like TTIP, CETA and TISA). The ongoing threats to the availability of water as a basic right and public service were again confirmed this summer, with the planned inclusion of water services in Greece as part of the privatisation list under the Greek bailout programme. The Commission should be giving priority to responding to this legitimate citizens' initiative and not seeking to brush it under the carpet. It would be even more cynical of the European Parliament, as the directly-elected voice of Europe's citizens, to try and fob this initiative off."

An alternative resolution tabled by EPP group MEPs, with the support of MEPs from the ECR and ALDE groups, would fundamentally water down the report adopted by the EP's environment and public health committee on the key elements - legislative protection of the right to water and the exclusion of water from trade negotiations.

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Claude Turmes

Member

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