

PRESS RELEASE

European water experts comment on revision of Water Framework Directive

The European Water Association (EWA) invited their national and corporate members to a Water Breakfast at the European Parliament in Strasbourg to discuss the upcoming development in EU Water Policy.

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Strasbourg, 3 October 2018. More than 30 participants, among them 8 Members of Parliament, met in Strasbourg to discuss water topics, however in particular, the upcoming proposal to revise the Water Framework Directive. Mrs. Birgit Collin-Langen, the German MEP representing the EEP, co-hosted the first event of this kind where the EWA, as one of the key stakeholders in European water issues, was able to meet and discuss policy issues in a personal setting with the attending MEPs.

The EWA Position Paper on the 2019 revision of the Water Framework Directive was handed over to the attending Members of Parliament at this EWA event. In this Position Paper the EWA urges the politicians to provide clarity, not only for the EWA but for all the involved stakeholders, on the strategy beyond 2027.

The EWA Position Paper presents its key perspectives which are imminent for the path going forward:

- Ensuring continuation of the Water Framework Directive beyond 2017
- Creating reliable foundations for water management – the need for interim targets
- Implementing the “one out – all out” principle
- Clarifying the non-deterioration principle
- Needing to address all sources of pollution
- Monitoring the process
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the “phasing out” obligation
- Harmonising the Water Framework Directive with other European regulations

“The Water Framework Directive is viable. However, we urge to maintain the objective to attain good water status or good ecological status for all waters”, states Mrs. Wendy Francken, the Chairwoman of the Working Group within the EWA on “European Water Policy”. Furthermore, The EWA Secretary General, Johannes Lohaus, adds that “the national actors as well as the local communities are entitled to more transparency in the indispensable, long-term water planning policy.”



Picture: EWA representatives handed over the EWA Position Paper to MEP Birgit Collin-Langen

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After a fruitful debate, the following conclusions and recommendations were formulated:

- All partners need to work together! The EWA and its national member associations all over Europe are ready to enter into any conversation and stay as a partner in the future;
- The EWA would be happy to share the experience and expertise within its Standing Committees with the European Parliament;
- Climate change will impact significantly on water resources and will magnify many of the problems encountered today if no action is taken to resolve them;
- For sectors which exert significant pressures on water resources, frank and open dialogue about how the sectors should develop to ensure the long-term sustainability of their activities. Agriculture which is probably the sector which exerts the most significant pressures on water resources across most of Europe is one of the sectors which would benefit from such a dialogue;
- Already very positive experiences have been made with such dialogues in other sectors, e.g. the hydropower sector, which exerts significant pressure on water resources, especially in mountainous regions of Europe. We need to learn from good examples as well. The case of the cooperation between the city of Leipzig and agricultural stakeholders in the surrounding countryside was quoted as another illustration of how dialogue and cooperation can contribute to more sustainable win-win solutions;
- The use of water needs to contribute to resource efficiency and to the circular economy. Efficiency is needed, not only in the use of energy but also in the use of water and the resources present in wastewater.

For more information on the EWA Position Paper on the Water Framework Directive revision in 2019, please click as follows: <http://www.ewa-online.eu/publications.html>

EWA

The European Water Association (EWA) is an independent non-governmental organisation promoting the sustainable and improved management of the total water cycle and hence the environment as a whole.

It is one of the major professional associations in Europe that covers the whole water cycle, as well as wastewater and drinking water, water and wastewater treatment related wastes. With member associations from many European countries, EWA includes most of the current European Union Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland. Today, EWA consists of 25 European leading professional organisations in their respective countries, each representing professionals and technicians for wastewater and water utilities, academics, technology providers, consultants and contractors, local authorities and regulators. The Association also has a growing number of corporate members: firms and enterprises, institutes or associations. EWA thus represents about 50,000 professional individuals and specialists working in the broad field of water and environmental management.

This press information is also available under: www.EWA-online.eu