

## EU water legislation

During the December plenary session, Parliament is due to hold a joint debate on water legislation, and subsequently to vote on final adoption of the regulation recasting the Drinking Water Directive (DWD) and on a resolution on the implementation of EU water legislation. Revising the DWD is a result of the first-ever successful European citizens' initiative 'Right2Water'.

### European Commission

#### Water intended for human consumption (recast of the Drinking Water Directive)

The Commission adopted its [proposal](#) in February 2018 as a response to the European citizens' initiative 'Right2Water'. The proposal seeks to improve tap water quality by updating requirements, tightening limits for pollutants and adding new substances to safety standards. Member States should improve access especially for vulnerable groups who currently have difficulty in accessing drinking water. Households and restaurants should be encouraged to use tap water instead of bottled water. According to the Commission, reducing consumption of bottled water can help households in Europe to save more than €600 million per year, while at the same time reducing plastic waste.

#### Fitness Check of EU water legislation

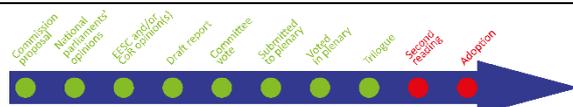
In December 2019, the Commission published a [Fitness Check](#) of the EU's water legislation – the Water Framework Directive (WFD), Environmental Quality Standards Directive, Groundwater Directive and the Floods Directive. It concluded that the legislation is broadly fit for purpose, but that there is room for improvement: implementation has been significantly delayed and until now less than half of the EU's water bodies are of good status. In October 2020, a follow-up [initiative](#) was launched, addressing the findings of the Fitness Check relating to chemical pollution affecting surface and groundwater. The initiative is connected to the upcoming [Zero Pollution action plan](#) under the European Green Deal.

### European Parliament position

Parliament concluded its first reading on the Drinking Water Directive recast in March 2019. After an early second-reading [agreement](#) reached in December 2019 during the fifth trilogue meeting, Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) endorsed the provisional agreement on 18 February 2020. The Council formally adopted its position at first reading on 23 October 2020. The new rules include hygienic requirements for materials in contact with drinking water and give the European Chemicals Agency a key role to ensure that only safe substances are used in pipes and taps. The updated directive addresses concerns about endocrine disruptors, pharmaceuticals and microplastics by introducing a watch-list mechanism. The first watch-list will be adopted within one year of the entry into force of the recast directive. Parliament is expected, at second reading, to approve the Council's position without amendment.

The ENVI committee also adopted a [motion for resolution](#) on the implementation of EU water legislation on 1 December 2020. It stresses that revision of the WFD is not currently required, but strongly regrets that its objectives have not been reached mainly due to inadequate funding and slow implementation. To improve water quality, water-related objectives have to be better integrated into other sectoral policies, in particular agriculture, transport and energy, chemicals and pollutants, and urban wastewater treatment.

Second-reading recommendation: [2017/0332\(COD\)](#);  
Committee responsible: ENVI; Rapporteur: Christophe Hansen (EPP, Luxembourg).



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