

2.9.2015

A8-0228/1

Amendment 1

Esther Herranz García

on behalf of the PPE Group

Jørn Dohrmann

on behalf of the ECR Group

Report

A8-0228/2015

Lynn Boylan

Follow-up to the European Citizens' Initiative Right2Water
2014/2239(INI)

Motion for a resolution (Rule 170(4) of the Rules of Procedure) replacing non-legislative motion for a resolution A8-0228/2015

European Parliament resolution on the follow-up to the European Citizens' Initiative Right2Water

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Directive 98/83/EC of 3 November 1998 on the quality of water intended for human consumption (hereinafter 'the Drinking Water Directive')¹,
- having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (hereinafter 'the WFD')²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the citizens' initiative³,
- having regard to Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concession contracts⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 November 2012 entitled 'A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources' (COM(2012)0673),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 19 March 2014 on the European Citizens' Initiative 'Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!' (COM(2014)0177) (hereinafter 'the communication'),
- having regard to the Commission's 'Synthesis Report on the Quality of Drinking Water in the EU examining the Member States' reports for the period 2008-2010 under Directive 98/83/EC' (COM(2014)0363),

¹ OJ L 330, 5.12.1998, p. 32.

² OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

³ OJ L 65, 11.3.2011, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 1.

- having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2014 on the EU and the global development framework after 2015¹,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the aforementioned Commission communication of 19 March 2014²,
 - having regard to the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 28 July 2010 entitled ‘The human right to water and sanitation’³, and the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 18 December 2013 entitled ‘The human right to safe drinking water and sanitation’⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 October 2008 on addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union⁵,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2012 on the implementation of EU water legislation, ahead of a necessary overall approach to European water challenges⁶,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Development and the Committee on Petitions (A8-0000/2015),
- A. whereas ‘Right2Water’ is the first European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) to have met the requirements set out in Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 on the citizens’ initiative and to have been heard by Parliament after receiving the support of 1.66 million citizens at the time of submission;
- B. whereas water supply and sanitation are services of general interest and not commodities;
- C. whereas the full implementation of the human right to water and sanitation, as recognised by the UN and supported by the EU Member States, is essential for life; whereas the proper management of water resources plays a crucial role in guaranteeing sustainable water use and safeguarding Europe’s natural capital;
- D. whereas at least 748 million people do not have sustainable access to safe drinking water, and a third of the world population lacks basic sanitation; whereas, as a result, the right to health is threatened and diseases spread, causing suffering and death and posing major impediments to development; whereas every year, 3.5 million people die of water-borne illnesses; whereas about 4 000 children die daily of water-borne diseases or due to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene; whereas the lack of access to potable water kills more children than AIDS, malaria and smallpox combined; whereas there is,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0059.

² Not yet available in the Official Journal.

³ A/RES/64/292.

⁴ A/RES/68/157.

⁵ OJ C 9 E, 15.1.2010, p. 33.

⁶ OJ C 349 E, 29.11.2013, p. 9.

however, a clear downward trend in these numbers and their decline can and must be accelerated;

- E. whereas the EU is the largest donor in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector, with 25 % of its annual global humanitarian funding dedicated solely to supporting development partners in this area;
- F. whereas water supply and sanitation are services of general interest, and revenues from the water management cycle should cover its expenses and improvement costs, provided that the public interest is safeguarded;

The ECI as an instrument of participatory democracy

1. Takes the view that the ECI is a unique democratic mechanism which has significant potential to help bridge the gap between European and national social and civil society movements, and to promote participatory democracy at the EU level;
2. Stresses that the Commission should ensure the utmost transparency during the two-month analysis phase, that a successful ECI should receive proper legal support and advice from the Commission and should be properly publicised, and that promoters and supporters should be kept fully informed and updated throughout the ECI process;
3. Acknowledges the fact that the support of 1.66 million EU citizens for this ECI has influenced the Commission's decision to exclude water and sanitation services from the Concessions Directive;
4. Calls on the Commission, in line with the primary objective of the Right2Water ECI, to come forward with proposals which preserve universal access to drinking water and sanitation, and welcomes its support for increasing transparency in the water sector; advocates, moreover, that universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation be recognised in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
5. Asks the Commission to lead a comprehensive information campaign on the measures that have already been taken in the field of water and on how these measures could contribute to achieving the objectives of the Right2Water ECI;

The right to water and sanitation

6. Recalls that the UN has recognised that the human right to water and sanitation entitles everyone, without discrimination, to physically accessible, sufficient and safe access in salubrious conditions for domestic and personal use, which grants privacy and ensures human dignity;
7. Backs the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and stresses the importance of his work and that of his predecessor on recognition of this right;
8. Deplores the fact that in the EU-28 more than 1 million people still lack access to a safe and clean drinking water supply and nearly 2 % of the population lacks access to

sanitation, according to the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), and therefore urges the Commission to act immediately;

9. Calls on the Commission to identify areas in which water shortage is an existing or potential issue, and to help the Member States, regions and areas concerned, in particular rural areas and deprived urban areas, to address this issue properly;
10. Calls on the Commission, the European Investment Bank and the Member States to support water service operators and competent authorities in the EU which lack the necessary capital in accessing available EU funding and long-term loans at a preferential interest rate, particularly for the purpose of investing in building, maintaining and renewing water infrastructure in order to provide access to high-quality water services;
11. Reminds the Member States of their responsibility in implementing EU law; urges them to fully implement the Drinking Water Directive and all related legislation; reminds them to identify their spending priorities and to make full use of the opportunities for EU financial support in the water sector afforded by the new financial programming period (2014-2020), in particular through an investment priority specifically centred on water management;
12. Notes that since 1988 its Committee on Petitions has received a significant number of petitions from EU citizens in many Member States expressing their concerns about water supply and quality and wastewater management; draws attention to a number of negative factors deplored by petitioners which are responsible for poor water quality and thus have an impact on the environment and on human and animal health; considers that these petitions demonstrate a genuine interest on the part of citizens in the thorough enforcement and further development of sustainable water-related EU legislation;
13. Supports the development of social policy schemes (e.g. water affordability schemes) in order to secure access to water and sanitation services for people who are unable to afford, or have no access to, such services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the lack of data on availability and access to drinking water and sanitation services, prioritising its provision to marginalised user groups, where appropriate;
14. Encourages the Commission to draw up a European legislative framework for the reuse of treated effluent in order, in particular, to protect sensitive activities and areas; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to promote sharing of experience between the health agencies of Member States;
15. Calls on the Member States to complete their River Basin Management Plans as a matter of urgency and as a key element in the enforcement of the Water Framework Directive, and to implement them properly with full respect for the overriding ecological criteria; draws attention to the fact that certain Member States are increasingly confronted with damaging floods which have a severe impact on the local population; points out that the River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive, and the Flood Risk Management Plans under the Floods Directive, afford a great opportunity to exploit synergies between these instruments,

thereby helping to provide clean water in sufficient quantities while reducing flood risks; recalls, furthermore, that each Member State should have a central webpage to provide information on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, so as to facilitate an overview of water quality and management;

Water services and the internal market

16. Recognises that Member States, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, have the right to decide to use different water supply management systems;
17. Recalls that the option of remunicipalising water services should continue to be ensured in future without any restriction, together with the freedom to award contracts in the case of cooperation in the fields of water and sanitation services, while ensuring compliance with the competition rules of the internal market;
18. Stresses that regional and local authorities have a duty to guarantee universal access to water, ensuring that the most suitable operators are chosen and that they deliver quality water, safe drinking water and improved sanitation to the public while safeguarding the public interest;
19. Stresses that the special nature of water and sanitation services should be observed in any trade agreements that the EU negotiates;
20. Recalls that water and sanitation services concessions are subject to the principles laid down in the Treaty and must therefore be awarded in accordance with the principles of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination;
21. Stresses the importance of national regulatory authorities in ensuring fair and open competition between service providers, in facilitating faster implementation of innovative solutions and technical progress, in promoting the efficiency and quality of water services, while protecting consumers' interests, ensuring continuity of supply and, first and foremost, safeguarding the public interest; calls on the Commission to support initiatives for regulatory cooperation in the EU in order to support, mutual learning and exchange of best regulatory practices;
22. Highlights the success of both public-private and public-public partnerships in exchanging best practices in water provision, and calls on the Commission, therefore, to promote both forms of cooperation among water operators by means of financial and non-financial incentives; welcomes the Commission's recognition, for the first time, in the communication, of the importance of public-public partnerships, but calls on it to also recognise the importance, necessity and usefulness of public-private cooperation;
23. Welcomes the successful efforts of some water operators to enhance users' participation in improving water service provision and the protection of water resources, and recalls that local institutions can play an important role in the decision-making process with regard to water management;
24. Asks the Member States and local authorities to introduce, if they have not already done so, social water policy to support people who, for reasons beyond their control, are

- unable to afford access to water and sanitation services; calls on the Commission to organise sharing of experiences between Member States on the social aspect of water policy;
25. Encourages water companies and the public authorities responsible to reinvest in maintaining and improving water services and protecting water resources;
 26. Points out that sound water management is shaping up to be a priority, both ecologically and environmentally, for the decades to come, as it fulfils energy and agriculture requirements and responds to economic and social imperatives;
 27. Calls on the Commission to make the renewal of ageing drinking water networks a priority in the Investment Plan for Europe by placing these projects on the list of EU projects; stresses the leverage effect these projects would allow to operate on non-relocatable employment, thus helping to stimulate the green economy in Europe;
 28. Calls on the Commission to promote the sharing of knowledge among Member States on how to survey the state of their networks, which should make it possible to begin renewal work and put an end to waste;
 29. Calls for greater transparency, in order to inform consumers more extensively about water and to contribute to more sustainable management of water resources; to this end, encourages the Commission to continue its work with Member States in order to share national experiences relating to the establishment of water information systems;

EU external policy and development policy in the water sector

30. Stresses that EU development policies should fully integrate universal access to water and sanitation by encouraging good practices and sharing of knowledge, as well as cooperation programmes in this sector;
31. Emphasises that assistance for safe drinking water and sanitation should be given high priority in the allocation of EU funds and in assistance programming; calls on the Commission to ensure adequate financial support to capacity-development actions in the water domain, relying on and cooperating with existing international platforms and initiatives;
32. Insists that the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in developing countries should be given high priority both in official development aid (ODA) and in national budgets; recalls that water management is a collective responsibility; favours open-mindedness in relation to different aid modalities, but strict adherence to development effectiveness principles, to policy coherence for development and to an unwavering focus on poverty eradication and the maximisation of the development impact; supports, in this regard, the involvement of local communities in the realisation of projects in developing countries, as well as the principle of community ownership;
33. Stresses the scandalous fact that although progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on safe drinking water is on track, almost one billion people are still drinking untreated drinking water, and the sanitation target is far from being met;

34. Considers that water should be at the heart of the work in preparation for two major international events in 2015, namely the post-2015 agenda summit and COP 21 on climate; strongly supports, in this context, the inclusion of ambitious and far-reaching targets for water and sanitation, such as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030, to be adopted in September 2015; reiterates that ending poverty through the post-2015 process will be possible only if we ensure that everyone everywhere has access to clean water, basic sanitation and hygiene;
35. Stresses that realisation of all the SDGs requires mobilisation of much more financing for development than is currently provided, from both developed and developing countries; urges the Commission to ensure that aid is spent effectively and that it is better targeted to the WASH sector in the perspective of the post-2015 development agenda;
36. Calls for the creation of a global monitoring mechanism to track progress in achieving universal access to safe drinking water, the sustainable use and development of water resources and the strengthening of equitable, participatory and accountable water governance in all countries; calls for effective monitoring of projects carried out through external aid;
37. Recalls that the World Health Organisation has stated that, in the initial situation, without the application of the latest innovative water-treatment and -saving technologies, between 100 and 200 litres of water per day per person is optimal, while noting that 50 to 100 litres is required to ensure that basic needs are met and few health concerns arise;
38. Commends certain water operators which dedicate a percentage of their annual turnover to water partnerships in developing countries, and encourages the Member States and the EU to create the necessary conditions for putting such partnerships in place;
39. Stresses that efficient and equitable management of water resources relies on the capacity of local governments to deliver services; calls on the EU to further support, therefore, the strengthening of water governance and infrastructure in developing countries, while addressing in particular the needs of vulnerable rural populations;
40. Supports the Global Water Solidarity Platform launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to engage local authorities in finding solutions to water challenges; also welcomes the '1 % solidarity for water and sanitation' initiative and other initiatives taken by citizens and authorities in some Member States in order to support projects in developing countries with funds from consumption fees;
41. Calls on the Commission to re-launch the 'Water Facility' instrument, which has proved to be effective in fostering better access to water services in developing countries by promoting capacity-building measures for local communities;
42. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

Or. en