

**Question for written answer E-014179/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Water management in the EU - water trading

In November 2013, Ecologistas en Acción, Agua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources considers water trading to be an instrument that could help to improve water efficiency and overcome water stress.

Water trading between individuals is carried out by users who, for various reasons, have stopped using the resource, and therefore transfer the rights to other users who are going to use it. When a resource ceases to be used it remains in the water environment, and does environmental work, but if this water is transferred to another user it is subtracted from the natural water environment, ceasing to carry out its function and, therefore, trading of rights between individuals will always lead to an increase in consumption. Trading of water rights between individuals is at odds with the principle that water is a public asset, so individuals who own a right, and not the resource itself, ought not to be able to sell it to third parties.

The creation of public water banks is only acceptable with the aim of water used for irrigation or industry being obtained to guarantee environmental flows and sufficient supply to populations, during periods of drought.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions laying down that:

1. water trading between individuals be prohibited?
2. public water banks that are created operate solely during periods of drought, on a temporary basis, to acquire water used for irrigation or industry and to guarantee environmental flows and sufficient supply to populations, provided that the exchanges are carried out solely within a single water catchment area?
3. Member States may expropriate water rights when supply to populations or for environmental uses is jeopardised?