

## **Right2water: First ever European Citizens Initiative to make it !**

(Press communication - Brussels, May 7, 2013) The first up and running European Citizens Initiative (ECI) – [Water is a Human Right](#) has collected over 1.5 million signatures across Europe, and continues counting. 8 countries have passed the minimum number of signatures required. These countries are: Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Slovenia.

This is the first ever ECI to have cleared all the hurdles of the legislation but the campaign will continue because there are several countries where only a few thousand signatures are needed to pass the threshold: Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus and the Netherlands. In a number of other countries the campaign is up and running and thousands of signatures have been collected (both online and in paper): Portugal, France, Malta, Sweden, Ireland and Denmark.

Jan Willem Goudriaan, vice-president of the Citizens Committee says “Our European Citizens Initiative has managed to create a truly European debate about water and sanitation and the challenge to ensure that millions of Europeans have access to this basic Human Right. The financial and economic crisis and the pro-privatisation drive have galvanized millions of Europeans to rally to support our effort to keep water and sanitation out of the internal market rules.”

Our ECI’s Citizens Committee met recently to discuss the campaign and decided to continue until the summer. This will ensure that as many countries as possible manage to collect the minimum required number of signatures. The Right2water ECI lodged the demand with the European Commission on the first day possible – April 1st 2012 – and got it validated on May 10th.

We have been collecting signatures on paper and online since September 4th 2012 and in less than 9 months we have achieved what no previous European organization has ever done. “On Europe Day and in the year of European citizenship together we have made history. We expect that politicians across Europe will listen to the voice of citizens affirming water as a Human Right, as the United Nations did

in 2010. We want to thank the more than 140 organisations that have helped us as well as the thousands of citizens that have made this European Citizens' Initiative a success" said Mr. Goudriaan.

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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 265 trade unions; EPSU organizes workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI).

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