

Position on Recast of Drinking Water Directive

Water Europe (WE) is the voice and promoter of water-related innovation and RTD in Europe. WE is a membership-based multi-stakeholder organisation representing over 200 members from academia, technology providers, water users, water service providers, civil society, and public authorities. WE activities and positions are guided by its Water Vision “The Value of Water: Towards a Future-Proof European Water-Smart Society”.

In its Water Vision, Water Europe has set out a blueprint for a society in which the true value of water is recognised and realised, and all available water sources are managed in such a way that water scarcity and pollution of water are avoided, water and resource loops are largely closed to foster a circular economy and optimal resource efficiency, while the water system is resilient against the impact of climate change events.

The implementation of the Water Vision will contribute to tackling important global challenges, stimulate the development of state-of-the art technological and non-technological solutions, as well as creating new markets, and boosting Europe’s industries.

Water Europe welcomes the adopted report on the recast of the Drinking Water Directive as well the General approach of Council on the Drinking Water Directive. The recast of the Drinking Water Directive signifies a step in the right direction in updating the legislative framework to the challenges faced by the drinking water sector, and necessary to achieve a Water-Smart Society.

In view of the forthcoming trilogues, Water Europe would like to highlight that we strongly support the European Parliament’s position on the mandatory introduction of Member State water leakage reduction targets and requirements for water utilities to publicly disclose information on water leakage rates and energy performance. As such, we would ask you to support these measures throughout the trilogue negotiations process with a view to including them in the finally agreed text.

We also suggest some compromise proposals which would help reduce the amount of non-revenue water and improve the energy efficiency of the water sector.

	European Commission	European Parliament	Council	Suggested Compromise
Article 4: General obligations	-	Member States shall take measures to	-	Member States shall take measures to

		<p>ensure that competent authorities carry out an assessment of the water leakage levels on their territory and of the potential for improvements in water leakage reduction in the drinking water sector. That assessment shall take into account relevant public health, environmental, technical and economic aspects. Member States shall adopt, by 31 December 2022, national targets to reduce the leakage levels of water suppliers in their territory by 31 December 2030. Member States may provide meaningful incentives to ensure that water suppliers in their territory meet the national targets.</p>	<p>carry out an action plan on their commitments to improve water leakage reduction in the drinking water sector. The action plan shall take into account relevant public health, environmental, technical and economic aspects, including an assessment of the water leakage levels on their territory, and of the potential for improvements in water leakage reduction in the drinking water sector. The Commission shall adopt, by 31 December 2020, an implementing act which provides a template for what is to be included in the action plan. Member States shall adopt, by 31 December 2022, national action plans to reduce the leakage levels of large and very large water suppliers. Member States may provide meaningful incentives to ensure that water suppliers in their territory reduce their water leakage levels.</p>
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<p>Annex IV – Information to the public</p>	<p>The following information shall be accessible to consumers on-line:</p> <p>for very large water suppliers, annual information on: the overall performance of the water system in terms of efficiency, including leakage rates and energy consumption per cubic meter of delivered water;</p>	<p>Information to the public : for large and very large water suppliers, annual information on:</p> <p>the overall performance of the water system in terms of efficiency, including leakage levels as determined by the Member States;</p>	<p>The following information shall be accessible to consumers on-line in a user-friendly and customized way or by other means:</p> <p>for very large water suppliers, annual information on: (a) the overall performance of the water system in terms of efficiency, including for instance leakage rates and energy consumption per cubic meter of delivered water;</p>	<p>The following information shall be accessible to consumers on-line in a user-friendly and customized way or by other means:</p> <p>for very large water suppliers, annual information on: (a) the overall performance of the water system in terms of efficiency, including leakage rates and energy consumption per cubic meter of delivered water;</p>
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Justification:

Water leakages and energy consumption of water services can sometimes be challenging and not sufficiently addressed, we believe that the Review of the Drinking Water Directive should include measures to ensure that the opportunity to tackle these issues can be capitalized.

As such, we very much hope that during the trilogues following measures will be supported:

Introduction of water leakage targets
Article 4

We support the introduction of **mandatory action plan to reduce leakage levels by 2030**, as well as the appropriate incentives in order to be able to achieve these targets.

Current leakage rates at EU level are very high. According to the Commission’s impact assessment, **23% of treated water is lost in public water supplies in Member States**. From

an economic perspective, the reduction of real water losses would create significant financial gain for water suppliers due to the better efficiency of the distribution network.

For example, a **6-mm hole in the water pipe would cause the annual loss of 29,7 million liters of water or 13 500 Euros¹.**

An accurate and preventive **detection of water leakage in the distribution system** in situ with existing technologies allows to prevent construction work on long distances to detect leaks or even emergency responses caused by pipe burst and sinkholes. From experience, costs for long distance extrusive leak detection on large water pipe are approximatively of 2 million EUR per kilometer of pipe.

However, in situ leak detection on a similar system with **localized reparation of the leaks can be limited to 0.5 to 1 million Euro.**

The reduction of water leakage in the distribution system would allow the optimization of energy use and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by preventing waste energy in the treatment and pressurized pumping of water that is ultimately lost through leakage of the system.

In Brussels, for example, a leak of 8,3 mm, assuming real water losses of about 23%, water leakage leads to a total volume of drinking water lost per year of 11,1 million m³/year, which equates to 634,4 Mtoe/year, or the equivalent carbon dioxide emissions of 138 cars running non-stop for the whole year.²

We believe that targets would be the only appropriate policy measure to be able to ensure that the water infrastructure can be upgraded to the sustainable economic benefit of the municipalities and communities across the EU.

Public information requirements on energy and water distribution efficiency Annex IV

We support the introduction of public information provisions for large water suppliers to include performance in terms of **energy efficiency and leakage levels**. This would enable to view the **energy efficiency of drinking water production** throughout the entire value chain.

¹ Assumptions of pipe pressure of 6,9 bar and nominal cost of water of 0,45 Euro/L

² Energy for disinfecting by UV and distributing the water under 6,9 bars pressure in Brussels: 0,15 kW/m³ or 0,033 kg CO² equivalent/m³. Considering 23% of water losses in Brussels, we waste 1,77 GW or 634,4 metric tons of CO₂ eq. per year, equivalent to 138 cars running non-stop on gas for the whole year (Source: Xylem Inc. based on International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2016*, Brussels Environment, Eurostat, US Environmental Protection Agency)

We believe that providing information to the public on the performance in terms of energy consumption and leakage rates would **incentivize the optimization of energy use by preventing waste energy in the treatment and pressurized pumping of water that is ultimately lost through leakage of the system.**

Water Europe remains available to further answer questions or comments.

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