

Quality of water intended for human consumption. Recast

2017/0332(COD) - 01/10/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Michel DANTIN (EPP, FR) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast).

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows.

Objective: the proposed Directive shall protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean, and to promote universal access to water intended for human consumption.

Access to water for all: the report highlighted the goal of achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all and the European Citizens Initiative Right2Water. Without prejudice to Directive the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and to the principles of **subsidiarity and proportionality**, Member States shall, whilst taking into account the local and regional perspectives and circumstances for water distribution, take all necessary measures to improve **universal access for all** to water intended for human consumption and promote its use on their territory.

Taking into account the **principle of recovery of costs** set out in Directive 2000/60/EC, Member States shall improve access to water for **vulnerable and marginalised groups** without jeopardising the supply of universally affordable high-quality water.

Member states shall also take measures to:

- improve water access, such as setting up **free fountains** in cities and public places, where technically feasible and proportionate;
- **encourage tap water** to be provided in restaurants, canteens and catering services for free or for a low service fee;
- launch campaigns to encourage the general public to carry **reusable water bottles** and launching initiatives to raise awareness of the location of refill point.

Risk-based approach to water safety: Member States shall ensure a **clear and appropriate distribution of responsibilities** between stakeholders, as defined by the Member States, for the application of the risk-based approach with regard to the bodies of water used for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption and domestic distribution systems. Such distribution of responsibilities shall be tailored to their institutional and legal framework.

Updating drinking water quality parameters: the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe conducted a detailed review of the list of parameters and parametric values laid down in Directive 98/83/EC in order to establish whether there is a need to adapt it in light of technical and scientific progress. In view of the results of that review, enteric pathogens and **Legionella** should be controlled and six chemical parameters or parameter groups should be added. The WHO recommendations, which are based on the most up-to-date scientific data and evidence at international level, should be followed and the parametric values adjusted accordingly.

More specifically, the proposal seeks to **tighten the maximum limits for certain pollutants** such as lead (to be reduced by half), per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), harmful bacteria, and introduce new caps for endocrine disruptors Bisphenol A and Beta-estradiol (50-28-2). It also monitors levels of **microplastics**, an emerging concern.

The report stated that it is important to monitor newly occurring substances in drinking water and to be able to introduce parameter values where a health risk is identified. An **EU-wide standard approach** to setting or deriving maximum levels is necessary to ensure the same level of protection throughout the EU.

Quality standards: a new Article was proposed stipulating that Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the treatment agents, the materials, and the disinfection procedures used for disinfection purposes in water supply systems **do not adversely affect** the quality of water intended for human consumption. Any contamination of water intended for human consumption from the use of such agents, materials and procedures shall be minimised without, however, compromising the effectiveness of the disinfection.

Leakages: Member States shall take measures to 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.

Transparency and information for consumers: transparency concerning water quality information and how it is provided to consumers is likely to encourage water operators to make every effort to meet their obligations in this area. Members considered that such information is necessary, provided that it is comprehensible, relevant and easily accessible to consumers. The aim is to increase citizens confidence in the water supply and **increase the use of tap water** for drinking, which could contribute to **reducing plastic usage** and litter.

Monitoring: by one year after the date of entry into force of this Directive, the Commission shall adopt delegated acts in order to supplement this Directive by adopting a methodology to measure the microplastics which are of particular concern due to the negative effects on marine and freshwater environments, aquatic life, biodiversity, and possibly to human health.