



30 October 2024

**Subject: Approval of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive Recast**

Dear Ministers of Environment,

Following the outcomes of the COREPER I of the 23rd of October and the confirmation of approval of the European Parliament's position by the majority of Member States, we, AquaFed, European Water Association, and Water Europe, reiterate our support to the approval of the new Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) by the Environment Council.

The water sector supports the current proposal, which represents a balanced consensus offering legal certainty and long-term clarity for public authorities in charge of wastewater to plan investments in compliance with the directive.

We acknowledge the challenges linked to implementing the directive, especially regarding the investments needed for the quaternary treatment, and the EPR scheme to cover at least 80% of the costs entailed. However, delaying approval of this critical directive would convey the message that public health and environmental protection are only a "nice-to-have" for national budgets that can afford to pay for it. Unfortunately, this is not the case today and does not reflect the citizen expectations for a healthier environment.

The directive aims to foster greater social responsibility among economic actors in line with the EU polluter pays principle, by reducing their negative externalities on public health and the environment and ensuring that the financial burden of mitigating these externalities does not disproportionately overwhelm member states' fiscal capacities or increase water prices for citizens. It also appropriately incentivizes the producers to find better alternatives.

Looking ahead, the utilities sector, represents 1% of Europe's GDP and workforce, leverages 72% of gross value added ([Water Europe, 2024](#)). Transforming wastewater treatment plants into resource hubs, will boost Europe's strategic autonomy and competitiveness through resource recovery, energy efficiency, and water reuse, benefiting society, the economy, and environmental stakeholders alike.

We hope that the Council will conclude the years of negotiation that were successfully agreed in Triilogue early 2024 without further delay, to allow all stakeholders starting the challenging but necessary step of the directive transposition into national law, for the benefit of our society, economy, and environment.

Kind regards,

Durk Krol