



# EU Groundwater Directive

## NGO briefing for Parliament's 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

28 April 2005



Dear Members of European Parliament,

In light of your vote tomorrow on the Klass report and additional amendments in the plenary session in Brussels the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and WWF, the conservation organisation, would like to inform you about their recommendations for the comprehensive protection of Groundwater, Europe's most important water resource. We believe that both the Commission's proposal and parts of the Klass report fail to provide comprehensive prevention of groundwater pollution. We, therefore, urge you to consider the following recommendations, in order to safeguard Europe's most important water resource.

### Prevention of groundwater pollution

It is of utmost importance that agricultural pollution is not exempted from the scope of the Directive. According to the EEA 87% of groundwater fails EU drinking water guide values for nitrates and 10 out of 11 countries report risk of pesticide pollution.

#### **No blanket exemption for pollution caused by agriculture:**

**Accept Am. 101 and 102** (strict standards for nitrates and pesticides)

**Reject Am. 44, 108 and 109** (exempts agricultural pollution, aims at Nitrates Dir. repeal)

In order to prevent groundwater pollution, a robust 'prevent and limit' approach is needed to maintain current protection following the repeal of the 1980 Groundwater Directive in 2013.

#### **Reinforcing effective measures to prevent pollution:**

**Accept Am. 94 and 99** (identify and prevent input of persistent and toxic chemicals; EU process to control common problem chemicals)

**Reject Am. 45.**

### Assessing groundwater status

Clear criteria are needed for assessing the status of groundwater as "good" or "poor". These must not weaken the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). In addition groundwater quality standards need to be comparable throughout Europe.

**Support Am. 97** (clarifies obligation to meet environmental objectives)

**Reject Am. 29 and Am. 65** ("good status" even if WFD environmental objectives not met) (insufficient and vague criteria for setting quality standards)

### Reversal of contamination trends

The requirement to achieve **trend reversal** must apply to any statistically significant upward trend without waiting until harm to the environment is caused.

**Reject Am. 18**

### Consideration and recognition of Groundwater Ecosystems

The unique fauna of the groundwater ecosystem contributes to the good quality of drinking water. This is especially the case in undisturbed groundwater.

**Accept Am.96 and 98** (introduces groundwater protection zones for pristine groundwater), **and Am.95 and 100** (which calls for further research on the groundwater ecosystem).

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