

...implementar u...
...de una cultura del encuentro en tot...
...derechos universales. La ciencia, la cultura, la...
...contribuir al logro de sociedades más justas, so...
...comprometidas con el cuidado de la casa común.

Francisco

PONENCIAS

SEMINARIO DERECHO HUMANO AL AGUA

PONENCIAS

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23 al 24 de febrero de 2017
Casina Pio IV | Ciudad del Vaticano



PONENCIAS

SEMINARIO

DERECHO HUMANO AL AGUA

APORTES Y PERSPECTIVAS INTERDISCIPLINARIAS SOBRE
LA CENTRALIDAD DE LAS POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS EN LA
GESTIÓN DE LOS SERVICIOS DE AGUA Y SANEAMIENTO

23 y 24 de febrero de 2017

Casina Pio IV | Ciudad del Vaticano



CÁTEDRA DEL DIÁLOGO Y
LA CULTURA
DEL
ENCUENTRO





“En realidad, el acceso al agua potable y segura es un derecho humano básico, fundamental y universal, porque determina la sobrevivencia de las personas, y, por lo tanto, es condición para el ejercicio de los demás derechos humanos.”

(Laudato Si', 30)

EJE 3

ECOLOGÍA INTEGRAL: UNA MIRADA CONJUNTA DE TRABAJADORES, CIENTÍFICOS, POLÍTICOS Y EDUCADORES EN LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE UN LIDERAZGO PARA UNA PARA UNA CULTURA DEL ENCUENTRO



Panel 7

**DERECHO HUMANO AL AGUA Y AL
SANEAMIENTO: EL MUNDO DEL
TRABAJO FRENTE A LA CULTURA
DEL DESCARTE**

“RIGHT2WATER”, A DIVERSE MOVEMENT TO ADVANCE THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER AND SANITATION IN EUROPE⁷⁵

RUTGER BOELENS⁷⁶ AND JERRY VAN DEN BERGER⁷⁷

ABSTRACT

From April 2012 to September 2013 the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) “Right2Water” ran and collected over 1.8 Million signatures across Europe. With that result it became the first ever successful ECI. It allowed the organizers to put their issue on the European political agenda. “Right2Water” proposed to implement the human right to water and sanitation in European legislation. The European Commission had to respond to “Right2Water”. The official response was as a cold shower to the organizers: The Commission stated that many of the suggestions were already part of EU policy and that it would not change or amend any existing legislation.

The paper looks into how the ECI became successful from a point of awareness raising and a social movement perspective. The trade unions in public services started the ECI to challenge European neo-liberal policies. “Right2Water” stated that “Water is a human right and a public good, not a commodity!” The ECI was supported by over 250 organisations and thousands of people that campaigned all over Europe. Water services are essential to all people and must be provided without discrimination that cannot be left to the market. This is the point that “Right2Water” tried to make in stating that water services cannot be liberalized. “Right2Water” gave a new momentum to social movements that were active on water issues and extended the focus of social movements that did not pay attention to water until then. It united a huge diversity of organisations.

75 This paper is based on: Jerry van den Berge, Jeroen Vos and Rutgerd Boelens (2018). ‘Uniting diversity to build Europe’s water movement Right2Water’. In: *Water Justice*, edited by R. Boelens, T. Perreault and J. Vos, Chapter 12. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming, Spring 2018).

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77 He is an independent Researcher and Consultant on Water & Sanitation for Sustainable Development, The Netherlands. He obtained his MSc “Land and Water Management” at Wageningen University in 1990. He was policy officer in the European federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU), based in Brussels from 2010 to 2015, dealing with water, energy and waste services. During that period, he coordinated the first successful European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) “Water is a human right!”. This ECI demanded that the European Commission should implement the “Human Right to Water and Sanitation” in European law. He is an expert in European policy and advocacy in the Water, Energy and Waste industries. He has been involved in the international trade union movement since 2004 and has a drive for social justice as pillar for sustainable development. At many occasions, he made the connection between social and environmental justice in forming alliances between trade unions and NGOs. He is a member of the alliance Justicia Hídrica / Water Justice. Most recently he is the founder of EuSAIN, an “European initiative for sanitation and health”, that aims to realise the newly recognised and distinct human right to sanitation.

INTRODUCTION

A European Citizens' Initiative is a tool for participatory democracy in Europe, that has been introduced by the European Commission since 1 April 2012. With this tool citizens can put an issue on the European political agenda if they meet the requirements. When an ECI is signed by least 1 million EU citizens within one year and passes minimum thresholds in at least 7 member states, it can lead to EU legislation (EC, 2011). The first successful European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), called "Right2Water", collected over 1.8 million signatures.

Of course, the subject matter must relate to areas where the EU has the power to legislate, and importantly there is no guarantee of legislation but the obligation to consider the matter. After a successful petition is received, a European Parliament hearing is held, along with meetings between the organizers and the Commission. The Commission then publishes a communication detailing the action it will take. Following the line that political opportunity in the EU is often procedurally dictated and reliant on shifting alliances between actors within the different institutions, the ECI represented a unique new configuration for an opportunity of bringing grassroots voices to the EU level (Parks, 2012).

The European federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) decided to take up the challenge and took the 'Human Right to Water and Sanitation' as their point of departure for a European Citizens' Initiative. For the trade unions, it was a continuation of their fight for "another (=social) Europe" and against the privatization of water services, using and testing this new European tool. The campaign was supported by a large number of NGOs and water activists throughout Europe and received support messages from around the world.

"Right2Water" made a proposal to implement the human right to water and sanitation in European law and formulated three demands for actions by which this should be done:

1. The EU institutions and Member States be obliged to ensure that all inhabitants enjoy the right to water and sanitation.
2. Water supply and management of water resources not be subject to 'internal market rules' and that water services are excluded from liberalization.
3. The EU increases its efforts to achieve universal access to water and sanitation.

The Right2Water campaign joined in the ongoing struggle for water justice that, in divergent ways, was framed and organized by many civil society groups, and took a stance against profit-driven water companies with the slogan "*water is a public good; not a commodity!*". The movement campaigned against the intention of the European Commission to further privatize the drinking water utilities in Europe, following the UK example. "Right2Water" faced a large diversity of contexts in each of the Member States of the European Union. The state of affairs regarding public or private governance of water utilities and the performance of those utilities differed per country. Moreover, the awareness about the theme of "the human right to water" among the general public, grassroots federations, NGOs, and trade unions also showed much diversity. Water in Europe is subject to both European as well as national law and a shared responsibility between the European Union and Member States, making it a suitable issue for an ECI. The initiative aimed to shift the focus of the European Commission from their market orientation to a rights-based and people oriented approach in water policy (www.right2water.eu/about).

NEOLIBERAL THREATS TO DRINKING WATER PROVISION IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

One of the main objectives of the European Commission (EC) is to create a European single market, landmarked in the Maastricht treaty in 1991. The single market was to be fulfilled by the four proclaimed freedoms of movement in Europe: of people, of goods, of capital and of services, expecting that markets can function best if governments withdraw as much as possible. This set the start of liberalization of public services like energy supply, public transport and water services. These services were in the European Union of the 1980s mostly delivered by governments or local authorities.

The privatization experiments in the UK in the 1980s were seen as an example of how to shift to a more open European market. It wasn't until the late 1980s that the idea of private companies managing water re-emerged on a large scale. Under Margaret Thatcher, the UK government privatized all water companies in England and Wales in 1989 - making it the first country to do so (Hall and Lobina, 2012a, Achterhuis et.al, 2010).

Coupled with the global emphasis on free market capitalism after the fall of communism, it began a wave of water utility privatization. Privatizing water utilities was encouraged by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which made public-to-private takeovers a condition of lending (Hall, 2005). As a result, the early 1990s saw a rush of cities and countries around the world signing over their nations' water resources to private companies. It was argued by the industry and investors that putting water in private hands translates into improvements in efficiency and service quality, and that services would be better managed. Privatizing also would provide governments an opportunity to gain revenue by selling off water services, and for companies to generate profit. But with profit the main objective, the idea of water as a human right arguably became a secondary concern. Problems with water privatization often began to occur soon after the initial wave of enthusiasm - from lack of infrastructure investment to environmental neglect (Hall and Lobina, 2012a; Lawson, 2015). In a relative short period in the UK local public companies and other public services were privatized. They quickly merged to multinational corporations and the provision of local services changed drastically into big transnational businesses. Trade unions saw these developments with fear and anger because of job losses and loss of control for governments and because of the increasing power for multinational corporations (Hall and Lobina, 2012b and 2012c). Based on the bad experiences with privatization in the past and with relative new forms of privatization such as PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) in Eastern Europe the Right2water organizers used the ECI as a means to counter European neo-liberal and (in their eyes) pro-privatization policies.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST PRIVATIZATION

Water activists have contested the EU market ideology either from a social, environmental or from a human rights perspective. Trade unions collaborated with water activists to prevent the negative consequences of privatization that often have resulted in job losses. They saw in the ECI a new tool and an opportunity to revive their struggle (EPSU, 2011). Water services are seen as a government obligation. According to "Right2Water", the vision behind European water policy is based on commodification of water, because of its water pricing policy (EEA, 2013). This 'market approach' to water management has been heavily criticized and motivated the ECI organizers for its second slogan "Water is a public good, not a commodity!"

Creating a market is contrary to and even undermining the objective of universal service provision. Privatizations show that if a corporation gains control over water resources, it sells

water to obtain the best price. The poor that cannot afford the new water price, as well as the people that have lost control over their local sources, should turn to their governments for support. If the government would subsidize in this case water supply to the poor, it means in fact that the government then subsidizes the profits of the corporation. The "Cochabamba Water War" is the most prominent example of a water war following from privatization of water services (Schultz, 2001). Strengthening the democratic, public character of water services is fundamentally at odds with the currently dominant neoliberal model, which subordinates ever more areas of life to the harsh logic of global markets (Balanyá et al., 2007: 248).

Nevertheless, the European Commission continued to pursue its path in privatizing water supply and sanitation, especially in the framework of post-crisis austerity measures as answer to the economic crisis (Zacune, 2013). "Right2Water" came in action at the aftermath of the financial crisis that hit Europe especially between 2008 and 2012. Many countries were still in recession and the EU announced tough measures to countries that did not comply with financial discipline as agreed in the Eurozone. Austerity policies were enforced across the EU member states, including pressures towards further privatization especially on the countries in the EU's "periphery" such as Greece and Portugal (Bieler, 2015; CEO, 2012). Pressure that was put on the Greek government by the European

Commission, IMF and European Central Bank (known as 'Troika') to privatize Greek water companies. In 2010 the 'Troika' ordered the Greek government to sell a number of public assets as part of a bailout. The public water companies of Athens and Thessaloniki were among these assets⁷⁸. The privatization and sale of the water companies met with huge resistance of the population. People and local organisations formed alliances to keep the water companies under Greek and public control (Steinfort, 2014). "K136" (Initiative 136) was one of them as were "SOSSteTONERO" and "Save Greek Water". All these organisations joined the Right2water campaign to show how EU policy threatened local public control over water. The Commission insisted that it did not force privatization upon Greece but the evidence was clear. In a letter in September 2012 to Food and Water Europe (FWE) the Commission admitted its support for privatization.⁷⁹

In 2011, the European Commission did a new attempt to further liberalize the services sectors in Europe by means of a proposal for a Concessions Directive that stipulated stronger laissez-faire and withdrawing of public control and management. The directive coincided with the Right2Water campaign and played an important role in the public debate on water privatization and in the signature collection, after a German television documentary of ARD Monitor in December 2012 revealed the conflict between the proposals of European Commissioner Barnier and the proposals of "Right2Water". As a result, after long debates in the European Parliament, the Commissioner had to give in and excluded water services from the scope of the Concessions Directive in May 2013 (CEO, 2013 and EC, 2013).

UNITY IN DIVERSITY IN THE RIGHT2WATER MOVEMENT

Water justice struggles entwine the struggles over water resources, the contents of water rights and rules, legitimate water authority, and water-based world views and discourses (Zwarteveen and Boelens 2014), and therefore inherently combine struggles for cultural, political, socio-ecological and socio-economic justice. Moreover, an "unjust" socio-economic situation does not automatically lead to protests and the development of a social movement.

78 See <http://corporateeurope.org/water-justice/2012/05/open-letter-eu-commission-water-privatisation>.

79 See <http://www.foodandwatereurope.org/pressreleases/eu-commission-forces-crisis-hit-countries-to-privatise-water/>.

Several factors have been suggested that influence the development of a protest movement.

For an actual practice of protest to grow into a social movement two issues are key: framing and networking. Framing of the problem and solution to that problem is crucial for the development of a social movement. We argue that the framing of the problem and solution can be pluriform: different groups and individuals have different ideas on what exactly is the problem and what might be desired solutions. People might also foreground and background different aspects of the problem definitions and proposed solutions. Also the organization of the movement can be pluriform over time and in different places. Acknowledging diversity, difference and plurality is an important cornerstone of water justice movements, while their ability to bridge the diverse ways of viewing and struggling for water justice is the inherent challenge as well as the indicator of strength, effectiveness and impact. Strong water movements show engagement and alliances across contexts, continents, scales and differences (Zwarteveen and Boelens, 2014).

BUILDING THE RIGHT2WATER CAMPAIGN

The trade unions in the public sector were divided on campaigning on 'water'. Many of them had little capacity, some knew little about EU policies and regulation and others had no or little experience in campaigning for an issue that is not about jobs or working conditions. They needed support from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with campaigning experience. The first objective of "Right2Water" was to form a broad coalition (Berge, 2014). In November 2011, the first allies were found in water activists in the existing water justice network: people and organisations that had campaigned against commodification, commercialization and privatization of water since the 1990s.

"Right2Water" took inspiration from the Italian Water Movement that organized a referendum in Italy against the privatization of water services in Italy in 2011. The referendum was a huge success with 26 million people voting NO to privatization of water services. The Italian water movement articulated its struggle in terms of water as human right and commons, framing the fight against water privatization as a paradigmatic battle for democracy (Carrozza and Fantini, 2016).

One of the first European groups that embraced the campaign was the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). They committed fully to the campaign expressing that water cannot be a charity for the poor, but is a human right that must be fulfilled for all. For EAPN lifting people out of poverty started with realizing their rights and basic needs to live a life in dignity. Other European NGO federations followed and together they prepared for an ECI to start on the first possible date: 1 April 2012. These NGOs were: The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), Food and Water Europe (FWE), and the Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG). This broad base allowed for carrying out a Europe-wide campaign at local and national levels. The very divergent results in different countries (see Table 1) show the large diversity of contexts and organizational strengths in each country.

During the campaign, broader support was sought and found among churches or religious groups, in development organisations, consumer's organisations, and other CSOs. In total a number of 149 organisations officially supported "Right2Water". Besides this, around one hundred other organisations endorsed the campaign in one way or another: from organizing events to collect signatures to promoting "Right2Water" in their media. (Lesske, 2015)

Table 1. Results of the ECI Right2Water and threshold per country

Country	Total signatures	Minimum signatories required EU
Austria	64,836	14,250
Belgium	40,912	16,500
Bulgaria	1,602	13,500
Cyprus	3,561	4,500
Czech Republic	7,986	16,500
Denmark	3,547	9,750
Estonia	1,245	4,500
Finland	15,200	9,750
France	22,969	55,500
Germany	1,341,061	74,250
Greece	35,720	16,500
Hungary	20,107	16,500
Ireland	2,959	9,000
Italy	67,484	54,750
Latvia	450	6,750
Lithuania	14,048	9,000
Luxembourg	5,698	4,500
Malta	1,703	4,500
Netherlands	22,065	19,500
Poland	4,807	38,250
Portugal	15,588	16,500
Romania	3,211	24,750
Slovakia	35,075	9,750
Slovenia	21,330	6,000
Spain	65,484	40,500
Sweden	12,258	15,000
United Kingdom	8,578	54,750
Total EU	1,839,484	TOTAL FROM ALL EU Member
		States must be > 1,000,000

This unconventionally broad alliance sometimes raised eyebrows among its members. Trade unions had sometimes worked with environmental groups and sometimes with an anti-poverty group, but never with both at the same time. The same went for trade unions and women's groups or public health campaigners. In civil society, there are many walls between

organisations from different backgrounds. The ECI was an experiment unknown for the main supporting organisations. The alliance attracted attention of politicians from the entire political spectrum and made that it was not put in a corner of “trade unionists”, “environmental activists” or another single-issue activist group. The weakness of being hugely diverse turned into a strength when “Right2Water” was seen as neither left- nor right-wing and having support from an exceptional wide range of organisations. It took a lot of discussion and patience to shape the broad coalition into a trusting, cooperating and enduring alliance. In only a few countries the campaign was really carried out by a broad alliance. In some countries, it was just a few of them, sometimes cooperating, sometimes each carrying out their own campaign to promote “Right2Water”.

The European coordination team, consisting of people from the European federations, decided to focus on a few countries where mobilizing power was thought to be strong, triggering support and campaigning for three to four months. After that the focus could shift to other countries, whereby it was assumed that in every country some basic preconditions had to be present or arranged. Most importantly: a national campaign team should be in place; several organisations would need to be capable of mobilizing people; there had to be a public policy interest in water and sanitation; and that there would need to be a basic awareness among the public about the objective and urgency of the European Citizens Initiative. This last point in particular proved to be a big obstacle in mobilizing people and motivating them to sign. High hopes were on Italy where the Italian Water Movement had organized a referendum against privatization of water in 2011 in which 26 million Italians had voted NO to privatization. In Italy, the privatization of common goods was considered to be a flight from democracy. Water served as exponent: *“write water but read democracy”*, was the slogan of the Italian Water Movement (Fattori, 2011).

The strategy did not fully work out as expected. The impression was that it would be easy to achieve one million signatures, but in October 2012, after two months of campaigning, it became clear that all “low hanging fruit” had been picked. Few people in Europe were aware of the water privatization problem and the ECI was an unknown instrument to most of them. The signatories in the first weeks were the core activists of the supporting organisations and the movement did not reach outsiders.

The campaign coordinators had to find new ways to reach out to people outside their inner circles.

Even in countries where a high turnout was expected, like Italy, the actual turnout disappointed the campaigners.

DIFFERENT NATIONAL REALITIES AND DIVERSITY IN MOVEMENTS AND CAMPAIGNING

European countries were facing different realities in water services and diversity in water movements and activists. In Scandinavia activism was nearly absent, whereas this was strongly present in Italy and to a lesser extent in Spain, France, Belgium and the UK. The existing water movement was too small to carry a European campaign. Trade unions were confident about their power, but overestimated the support among their members. The challenge was in bringing different groups and social movements together and to cooperate across countries and with different backgrounds.

The Italian Water Movement (IWM) was expected to spearhead Right2Water. All conditions were favorable: awareness on water, campaigning capacities, as well as support for participatory

democracy processes. However, the IWM faced a 'campaign fatigue' among its members and there was no mass mobilization for Right2Water as there was for the referendum in 2011. The fact that the Italian referendum did not result in the expected policy change made people lose confidence in the referendum mechanism, such as the ECI. Even though Tomasso Fattori, one of the leaders in the IWM stated: "Apart from water, there is another fundamental element which connects the Italian, Berlin and Madrid referenda with the ECI, and that is democracy itself. All of this is about putting democracy before corporate interests and financial markets; the right to water and democracy are closely connected" (Fattori, 2013: 119).

In Germany trade union Ver.di took its role as coordinator of a national campaign seriously and was the first union to build an alliance with national and local groups. It had a campaign plan, made campaign materials and developed a well-functioning website with text in German. It was the first to realize that the water movement needed to be extended to reach people outside the activists' circles in order to become successful. Ver.di connected trade unionists to water, social and environmental activists and made them join forces. (Conrad, 2015)

When a German TV journalist questioned EU Commissioner Barnier about his proposal for a Concessions Directive and the potential conflict with Right2Water, the campaign gained momentum

(ARD Monitor: "Geheimoperation Wasser" on 18 December 2012). The Commissioner was not aware of Right2Water and denied that his proposal would favour private companies, but the investigative journalists attracted important attention in Germany. A conflict was born. A TV show of the comedian Erwin Pelzig gave the campaign a boost⁸⁰.

In his TV show "Neues aus der Anstalt" on 22 January 2013 Pelzig said that the French EU Commissioner Barnier had proposed to privatize water services in Europe and ridiculed his proposal:

"water is life..., it's worrying if Europe wants to leave water to the market or to profit oriented enterprises". "Fortunately," he said, "there is a European Citizens' Initiative that tries to prevent privatization of water and that needs one million signatures". At the end of his sketch he showed the

Right2Water website in a very clever way by saying that he was not allowed to advertise for a website, but that he was allowed to show a (French) car on which he put a card with the name of the website. The sketch was very popular and went viral in the days after his show.

The German water sector was largely in hands of municipal companies ("Stadtwerke") and Berlin just had a bad experience after their water concession with RWE and Veolia. The Stadtwerke and the German population saw a real threat in the concessions directive if this could lead to take-overs by profit drive multinationals. German and Austrian media approached Right2Water and put the campaign in the spotlights (Deinlein, 2014).

In Spain, the Platform against the privatization of the Canal Isabel II and the 15-M Movement organized a popular consultation in the region of Madrid in March 2012 to vote over the privatization of the Canal Isabel II, with over 160.000 people voting NO to the privatization. Despite of this the Spanish organizations that supported Right2Water did not gain momentum until spring 2013. Different groups found each other and started a new movement *La Marea*

80 Fragment of Erwin Pelzig in his TV show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THXuS4kfYeo&feature=youtu.be>.

*Azul*⁸¹ that later led to the *Iniciativa Agua*⁸². This movement included the *indignados* and linked the local struggles in Spain to European policies, and managed to reach out to a wider group of people (Limon, 2013)

In Greece, in the spring of 2011, Thessaloniki's *indignados* movement orchestrated a mass mobilization when well over half a million people took to the streets to defy austerity and demand democracy, by opposing the push for privatization. The water workers of EYATH (Thessaloniki Public Water Company) and a group of citizens set up the 'Initiative 136' (K136) to get water into the hands of the people. The idea of K136 is that if every water user bought a non-transferable share, 'the public could own the water company through a system of neighbourhood co-operatives of water users coming together through a single overall co-operative' according to K136 founder Theodoros Karyotis (Wainwright, 2013). In spring 2013 this was followed by setting up SOSStONERO by the same water workers that made the link between Right2Water and the fight against privatization of the water companies in Greece. They showed to hat it was necessary to combat privatization both at local as well as EU level and gave the momentum to the ECI.

The organisations that supported Right2Water in France could not reach the minimum number of signatures needed. Even the help of best-seller writer Marc Levy and prominent politicians did not change this. People outside of the French water movement did not see the Concessions Directive as a problem, nor did they have a problem with the water service as it was run.

In the UK, many people had frustrations about the privatized water services and there was a debate about renationalization⁸³ (Tinson, 2015). However, the trade unions did not manage to mobilize this frustration and did not take initiative to campaign because they thought it would not turn back the privatizations in the UK. Other civil society organisations were willing to support Right2Water, but waited for the trade unions to take the lead.

Attention for Right2Water in the media and from the general public varied widely from country to country. Remarkably no relation was found between problems in water services and support of the ECI. Whereas problems in water supply were big in Romania and Bulgaria, (also related to privatization), there was very little support. It remains unclear whether this had to do with a lack of interest, a lack of involvement in EU affairs or a lack of capacity to campaign. In Romania, the country with the poorest quality of water services, nobody seemed interested in the ECI according to a trade union representative. As a result, no campaign was launched.

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

In March 2014, the European Commission responded to the ECI organizers as Right2water met with all the conditions that were set to an ECI. (see numbers in Annex 1). In its response, the Commission recognizes "*the importance of water as a public good of fundamental value to all Union citizens*" (EC, 2014: page 5). This was a recognition of what Right2water had campaigned for and an absolute victory for the movement. However, the response was not what the campaigners hoped for. The only concrete result was the exclusion of water from the concession directive (Limon, 2013). This was decided in June 2013 at a moment that Right2Water already collected over one million signatures and the European Commission felt

81 See http://www.elperiodicodearagon.com/noticias/aragon/marea-azul-nacera-zaragoza-defensa-gestion-publica-agua_829309.html.

82 See <http://www.iniciativagua2015.org/>.

83 See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/31/renationalise-english-water>.

the urgency to respond immediately to the first ECI that reached this milestone. The official response came in February 2014, six months after the end of the one-year campaign. The Commission stated that many of the suggestions made by Right2Water were already part of their policy and that it would not change, amend or propose any legislation. (EC, 2014)

Looking at the effects Right2Water had on EU and national policies there are a number of achievements. In many countries, the position of public water companies was enforced. Water laws were adapted in Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, and Greece to guarantee public control and access, affordability and good quality water to all inhabitants. Civil participation in water policy increased. Many people responded to the EU consultation of the drinking water directive (much more than in previous and similar consultations), that the Commission held in response to Right2Water. Besides the political effects the biggest achievement was in awareness raising about water and water policy. Before the ECI many people did not realize how water services were organized in their country, that there is a human right to water and sanitation and that the EU has a role in water policies and how the EU plays a role in privatization of water services. New alliances were formed that gave new energy and momentum to local struggles against privatization of water services (Limon, 2014). "Right2Water" gave the European water movements a political voice at diverse, interlinked scales.

The Right2Water campaign materialized as a pluriform social movement that resonated with the idea that water services are essential services for all people, and which must be provided without discrimination, to all inhabitants. The movement sustained that market mechanisms increase the gap between rich and poor in Europe and lead to better services for those who can pay for them and poorer quality services for those who cannot. Public control over water services is essential to ensure availability, affordability, quality and access for all; i.e. to ensure the human right to water and sanitation. When privatized, control could be turned in the hands of profit oriented companies that must ensure profits, not human rights.

Although the Commission several times stated that it had no intention to privatize water services, concessions are clearly a step towards privatization and 'opening the door' for corporations to demand access to a "local water market". To this respect, movements and grass roots organisations that had campaigned for Right2Water established new networks and were successful in many European countries in raising awareness among many people about the risks of privatization of water utilities.

When mobilizing for the human right to water and non-privatization of water services it proved difficult to campaign at the European level and it was necessary to adapt to national and local situations. The ECI Right2Water was the sum of 27 national campaigns and not the result of a single European campaign. In each country, an analysis of water policies, the concerns of people and active social movements had to be made. The available capacity to do this determined for a great deal the chance of campaigning successfully. This capacity was lacking in countries like the UK or Romania where circumstances to campaign was originally seen as favorable. The ECI contributed greatly to awareness raising on water and sanitation as human rights and helped the advance of a social movement for water justice in Europe and in several member states.

Interestingly, the campaign reached largest support in Germany, a country that has no problem with regards to its water sector, but where people mobilized when they found their water service to be under threat. This was also the case in Austria, Greece, Slovenia, and Slovakia where people signed to affirm that they wanted to keep local and public control over their water services. The movement was strongest in countries where it made the link between European policies and local consequences, when it was able to explain the problem and how it affects people in their daily life.

It took a long period of campaigning to raise awareness on the conflict of interests between market policies and human rights. It is likely that the impact would have been less strong if the movement would have been less diverse. Previous struggles against privatization of water remained unknown to the general European public and limited to water justice activists. This time, with engagement of trade unions, environmentalists, anti-poverty campaigners and many other civil society groups, it was possible to break out of this inner circle of water activists and reach an unprecedented audience, focusing on the issue of water service provision and the threat of privatization.

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