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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast) **(first reading)**
- Adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons
= Statements

Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria

The Republic of Bulgaria finds the final text of Article 11 “Minimum hygienic requirements for materials in contact with water intended for human consumption” unsatisfactory due to its overall conceptual unclarity and the lack of coherence between the requirements of the Directive on drinking water as part of the environmental legislation, and the requirements of the existing product harmonisation legislation.

We regret that our concerns regarding problems in practical implementation of the act have not been properly addressed in the final version of the act.

For that reason, Bulgaria cannot express its consent with the adopted text of Article 11 and therefore, it votes “*against*” as regards the final text of the Directive.

Statement by Luxembourg

In the spirit of compromise, Luxembourg is able to accept the agreement on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast), which also provides a positive response to the Right2Water initiative.

However, Luxembourg regrets that the solution retained for pesticide metabolites is not more ambitious and the fact that, in the absence of a detailed impact assessment, the consequences of applying the provisions on contact materials did not undergo sufficient analysis with regard to the costs and expenses to be borne by the stakeholders concerned.

Statement by the Netherlands **- Articles 1 and 16**

The Netherlands strongly supports the importance of access to drinking water and welcomed the Right2Water initiative. The Netherlands has a strong practice and legal framework regarding access to and the supply of good quality drinking water at the national level. However, the Netherlands remains of the opinion that the Drinking Water Directive, with a focus on drinking water quality, is not the appropriate instrument to address the issue of improving access to drinking water in the EU.

The Netherlands questions the widening of the scope of this Directive in a way that risks trading on the responsibility of Member States, especially the mandatory and specific nature of certain measures. The Netherlands supports the adoption of this Directive in view of the clear and wider benefits it will bring to the quality of drinking water and because we believe our drinking water system to be in line with the obligations of Article 16, but we stress that how the issue of access to drinking water is to be addressed, is the responsibility of Member States.

Statement by Cyprus, Hungary, and the Netherlands regarding recital 47

The abovementioned Member States support the adoption of the Drinking Water Directive, which will not only ensure high standards of safety of drinking water for our citizens, but will also indirectly improve the smooth functioning of the internal market.

However, we consider it entirely inappropriate to include general wording about the Commission taking action regarding access to justice in Member States in the statement of reasons of a legal act concerned with drinking water. This does not alter the current legal status on access to justice nor does it further empower the Commission to pursue legal action on these matters.

Compliance with the Aarhus Convention, to which the Member States are parties in their own right, is a matter that we take seriously. Member States' compliance with the Aarhus Convention can best be addressed, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, at Member State level. The real challenge to be addressed, however, remains the Union's own compliance with the Aarhus Convention, as referred to in Council Decision 2018/881 and in the findings of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee in case ACCC/C/2008/32. Notwithstanding the completion of the study requested by the Council, and the Commission's statement in its Communication on the European Green Deal of 11 December 2019 that it would "consider revising the Aarhus Regulation" (Regulation 1367/2006), we note that no such proposal has been mentioned in the Commission's work programme for 2020.

Although we are prepared to support the adoption of this Directive in view of the wider benefits it will bring, we will nevertheless be vigilant in ensuring that such language on access to justice in Member States will not be included in future legislative acts in the environment field.