



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
OF PUBLIC WATER OPERATORS

# **The revision of the UWWTD: Views from Europe's public water operators**

## **31 May 2023**



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC WATER OPERATORS

# About Aqua Publica Europea



## 67 MEMBERS

*Public water and sanitation operators*

## 80 MILLION

*citizens served every day*

## 2 MAIN OBJECTIVES

- *Promoting public water management*
- *Providing a platform for mutual learning*





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## UWWTD recast

### Key proposals:

- Make industry responsible for the treatment of toxic micropollutants ('polluter pays' principle)
- Enlarge the scope of the current Directive to agglomerations with a p.e. of 1,000 and above
- Require that Member States establish integrated water management plans with a 1% indicative target on SWOs
- Make the wastewater sector energy-neutral





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## UWWTD recast

Welcome the Commission's proposal but draws attention to the significant investment needs for the sector:

New legislation with stricter requirements



New expectations for water utilities



Climate change → higher risks and pressures





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## 1. Ensuring a fair distribution of costs



Additional treatment to urban wastewater to eliminate a broad spectrum of micro-pollutants

YET in the EU costs are covered by a mix of water tariffs (70%) and public budgets (30%)

- ✓ Need for a fair distribution of costs to strike a balance: sustainability  $\leftrightarrow$  social equity
- ➔ EPR scheme = necessary condition to maintain water affordability and ensure a level playing field in the EU + boost innovation





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## 2. Prioritising investments where they are most needed



New or strengthened requirements:

- Broaden obligation to connect to collecting systems
- Removal of micropollutants
- Stricter reduction levels for P & N
- Energy neutrality

→ Increased investments  
BUT potential low environmental benefits  
in some cases (e.g., water reuse, rivers  
without eutrophication problem)





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## 2. Prioritising investments where they are most needed

- ✓ Stronger emphasis on the need to adopt a preventive approach favouring actions to reduce pollution at source
- ✓ Context-based flexibility mechanisms and possibility of trade-offs to prioritise interventions where they are most useful
- ➔ Stronger link with the Water Framework Directive to ensure interventions are adapted to local ecological and chemical contexts of recipient water bodies





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## 2. Prioritising investments where they are most needed

### The example of stormwater overflow

 Indicative 1% target for SWOs

BUT doesn't take into consideration local contexts

- ✓ Environmental objectives based on the Water Framework Directive
- ✓ Extended deadlines to favour nature-based solutions (NBS)







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### 3. Preventing territorial cleavage



New or strengthened requirements:


- Broadened requirement to connect to collecting systems and carry out secondary treatment
  - Energy neutrality
- ➔ Stronger economic impact on rural areas
- ✓ Need to unlock EU structural and investment funds
  - ✓ Facilitate integrated water resources management at river basin level





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## 4. Adopting a realistic approach to energy neutrality

 Energy neutrality by 2040 at national level for all wastewater treatment plants above 10 000 p.e.

BUT spatial and technical constraints & increased energy needs for treatment

- ✓ Green energy produced off site
- ✓ Green energy sold to other industries
- ✓ Green energy from the electrical grid

