



DECLARATION on the occasion of the first anniversary of the UN recognition of WATER AND SANITATION as a HUMAN RIGHT

28 July is a memorable day. Today is the first anniversary of the recognition by the UN of water and sanitation as a human right. However, 1 billion people still do not have access to clean drinking water and 2.5 billion people lack access to sanitation. The UN resolution is a first step towards solving this problem.

The recognition of water and sanitation as a human right does not automatically increase the number of people with access to safe, clean and affordable water and sanitation. This right needs to be implemented by national governments. So far just a few governments have put the right to water into national legislation.

The situation of water as a Human Right differs from country to country. Some have a law or regulation of water and sanitation that supports poor households in paying for their (water) bills, other (rich) countries do not consider access to water as a problem and there is no legislation. The lack of legislation in some countries is used as an alibi in others not to improve their current situation. This is not admissible. For that reason, the lack of access to water and sanitation remains a problem for millions of people. Water is a common good and it has to be regarded as such by all Governments.

Private (often Multinational) companies step into the opening that governments leave to provide water and sanitation services to those who can pay for it. They lobby governments to privatise their water services, promising that the private company will improve service and give access to the poor. Very often the service becomes better for the rich and already connected households, but worsens and decreases access for the poor and unconnected. **Privatisation of water increases the gap between rich and poor.**

That is why the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) that organises workers in the water sector participated in the action taking place at public fountains in Brussels to raise awareness about the number of people without access to water and sanitation and the effects of privatisation of water services. Water is a public good that should be available and accessible to all the people and that should be safeguarded for future generations. Water and water resources must therefore remain under public control.

Water is for life, not for profit!