

PRESS RELEASE

ERM Coalition highlights urgent requirements of drinking water supply towards Cabinet of Sinkevičius, EU Commissioner for Environment

Karlsruhe, Germany, 03 June 2022: Drinking water suppliers in the major European river basins of the Danube, Elbe, Meuse, Scheldt, Ruhr and Rhine (ERM Coalition) together with EurEau Secretary General Oliver Loebel highlighted the need for much stricter regulation of chemical substances in the European legislative framework to protect the drinking water supply.

During a presentation of the European River Memorandum (ERM) and European Groundwater Memorandum (EGM) to Simonas Šatūnas, the Head of Cabinet of EU Commissioner Sinkevičius, the parties emphasized that the current releases of PMT chemicals – substances that are persistent (P), mobile (M) and/or toxic (T) (new hazard categories PMT and vPvM) – into the environment threaten the supply of clean drinking water for future generations.

“We call for strict rules for the approval of substances. Only substances that did not exhibit PM/T properties including through their degradation or transformation products, should be considered for approval. This refers to the CLP and the REACH regulations as well as the envisaged ban on PFAS chemicals (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances),” clarifies Prof. Dr. Matthias Maier, President of the International Association of Waterworks in the Rhine Basin, IAWR. “We also need full and transparent information available in the European Industrial Emissions Portal about which PM/T substances are released by producers”, he adds.

ERM and EGM include target values as well as intervention values, designed to be set as Environmental Quality Standards (Priority Substances) as well as Groundwater Quality Standards (Annex to Groundwater Directive), especially for PFAS, for so-called “non-relevant metabolites” of pesticides and for pharmaceuticals.

Oliver Loebel, EurEau Secretary General: “Drinking water suppliers have detailed knowledge about the situation of their resources. However, too often their call for better protection remains unheard. When PFASs are detected in groundwater, it is already too late. Only emission control at the source of pollution can help.”

Wolfgang Deinlein, IAWR Managing Director, pointed out the real urgency to implement the Farm-to-Fork Strategy’s reduction targets for pesticides and nutrients and the successful European Citizens’ Initiative “Save bees and Farmers“. To provide full protection from chemical pesticides in water protection areas, these areas now require definition as “sensitive areas” in the Sustainable Use of pesticides Regulation according to Zero Pollution Action Plan.

Head of Cabinet Satunas welcomed the presentation and promised to report back to Commissioner Sinkevičius. Also, he pointed out to the parties the importance of sharing these issues with other Commissioners involved in shaping current legislation. All parties shared common understanding on the importance of the recently started EU research project ZeroPM with a strong focus on prevention of PM/T substance emissions.

External link: <https://zeropm.eu/>



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