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European Groundwater Memorandum adopted on World Water Day European Coalition of Drinking Water Suppliers shows how the Drinking Water Supply from our valuable Groundwater Resources can be secured



Policy-Makers have to act

Karlsruhe, Germany, 22 March 2022: Right on time for today's World Water Day and its theme "*Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible*", the ERM Coalition adopted the *European Groundwater Memorandum to secure the quality and quantity of drinking water for future generations*. The ERM Coalition comprises the associations of drinking water suppliers in the major European river basins of the Danube, Elbe, Meuse, Scheldt, Ruhr and Rhine, inhabited by 188 million depending on clean drinking water. The drinking water suppliers point out that groundwater as essential resource requires not only increased appreciation but also intensive qualitative and quantitative protection in order to secure future drinking water supply.

Two years after publishing the European River Memorandum (ERM), the ERM Coalition is now complementing these guidelines with the protection of groundwater in 5 key requirements. The European Groundwater Memorandum sets intervention values for action requirements. The aim is to achieve a level of protection that takes into account both direct health protection as well as the precautionary principle and the general demand for purity of drinking water.

Prof. Dr. Matthias Maier, President of the International Association of Waterworks in the Rhine Basin, IAWR: "In addition to particular protection in drinking water protection areas, we need strict rules for the approval of substances. Non-natural substances that are persistent (P), mobile (M) or of concern to health or toxic (T) pose a particular risk to groundwater and a considerable threat to drinking water supply. Therefore, no substances with PM/T properties may be approved. Nor may their degradation and transformation products have PM/T properties."

Dr. Dirk Brinschwitz, representative of AWE, Association of Water Companies in the Elbe Catchment Area, adds: "If anthropogenic substances or nutrients are detected in groundwater above the intervention values and polluters continue their inputs, policy-makers have the duty to impose application restrictions and incentive levies on the sources of pollution. If these measures do not lead to the desired result, appropriate further steps, such as application bans, must be taken. For this, the general prerequisite is effective monitoring, which is far from being applied everywhere." In addition, the memorandum emphasises that knowledge of emission data, especially from agriculture and industry, in the catchment areas of groundwater extraction plants is crucial for safeguarding drinking water supply. Emission data must be made available to drinking water suppliers comprehensively and regularly.

Prof. Dr. Matthias Maier: "Especially in times of climate change, political decision-makers are called upon to ensure the essential protection of drinking water resources. This applies in particular to the revision of the EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of pesticides, for which the draft of the EU Commission is expected tomorrow, 23 March 2022."

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