



Water reuse: Commission welcomes the provisional agreement on minimum requirements for water reuse in agriculture

Brussels, 3 December 2019

The new rules, proposed by the Commission in May 2018, will set out harmonised minimum water quality requirements for the safe reuse of treated urban wastewaters in agricultural irrigation.

Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, said: *"With this provisional agreement, we are equipping the EU with a powerful tool to tackle some of the challenges posed by climate change. Together with water savings and efficiency measures, the use of reclaimed water in the agriculture sector can play an important part in addressing water stress and drought, while fully guaranteeing the safety of our citizens"*.

Currently, the practice of water reuse is established in only few Member States and it is deployed much below its potential. The newly agreed rules will facilitate and stimulate the uptake of this beneficial practice, which can ensure a more predictable supply of clean water for the EU farmers and help them to adapt to climate change and mitigate its impacts. By setting minimum requirements, the new rules will ensure the safety of the practice and increase citizens' confidence in agricultural produce in the internal EU market. This harmonised approach will also facilitate the smooth functioning of the internal market for agricultural produce and create new business opportunities for operators and technology providers.

Under the new legislation, treated urban wastewaters, which have already undergone certain treatments under the rules of the [Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive](#), would be subjected to further treatment to meet the new minimum quality parameters and thus become suitable for use in agriculture.

Besides the harmonised minimum requirements, the new legislation also sets out harmonised minimum monitoring requirements; risk management provisions to assess and address potential additional health risks and possible environmental risks; and a permitting procedure and provisions on transparency, whereby key information about any water reuse project would be made publicly available.

Next steps

The provisional agreement now has to be formally approved by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

Following approval, the Regulation will be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force 20 days later.

Background

The Regulation proposed by the Commission aims to alleviate water scarcity across the EU, in the context of adapting to climate change. It will ensure that treated wastewater intended for agricultural irrigation is safe, protecting citizens and the environment.

The proposal delivers on one of the commitments of the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#), and completes the existing EU legal framework on water and foodstuffs. It also contributes to reaching the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) in the EU (in particular Goal 6 on water and sanitation), as well as contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

For More information

Water reuse [proposal](#) and [annexes](#)

[Water reuse policy page](#)

[Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive](#)

[Implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan policy page](#)

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