

**To: Commissioner Sinkevičius, Commissioner, Environment, Oceans and Fisheries  
Minister Ćorić, President-in-office of the Environment Council  
Pascal Canfin, Chair, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety**

Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,  
Dear Minister Ćorić,  
Dear MEP Canfin,

We are writing to urge you to conclude the fitness check evaluation of the EU's flagship water law – the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) - by firmly announcing that the Water Framework Directive will not be amended, in accordance with the fitness check conclusions, and to focus on addressing the implementation gaps identified in the evaluation, including through the European Green Deal initiatives.

On 26 October of 2017, the European Commission announced the fitness check of the Water Framework and Floods Directives. This was 853 days as of the date of this letter. After this extensive evaluation and search for evidence, the fitness check conclusions found that slow progress in achieving the WFD's objectives "is *largely due to insufficient funding, slow implementation and insufficient integration of environmental objectives in sectoral policies, and **not due to a deficiency in the legislation.***"

The fitness check conclusions also underline that "*the Water Framework Directive is sufficiently prescriptive with regard to the pressures to be addressed, and yet flexible enough to reinforce its implementation as necessary with regard to emerging challenges not mentioned in the Directive such as climate change, water scarcity and pollutants of emerging concern*", making it clear that the Directive is fit to address emerging challenges in Europe.

After the widespread political support for the European Green Deal, the [strong conclusions on the Water Framework Directive](#) were a very encouraging sign that the EU would walk the talk. The mixed messages sent by the European Commission in recent weeks, however, have been worrying us. The Commission could not provide a conclusive response to cross party questions in the European Parliament urging not to amend the Directive and focus on making it work. Commission representatives also casted uncertainty about the future of the Directive in a recent exchange with member state advisory bodies. These messages indicate a lack of commitment to respect the findings of the fitness check, undermining proper evaluation of EU legislation.

While civil society and concerned Europeans await the strategies and communications on the European Green Deal, this is the first opportunity for the EU to **act** on its declared ambitions.

The support to preserve the Water Framework Directive in its current form has been unprecedented -- from [130+ civil society organisations](#), from [nearly 6000 scientists](#), and from the [375000+ citizens who participated](#) en masse in the public consultation. These communities know the importance of preserving freshwater ecosystems, as the home to Europe's most threatened species, and as vital tools to help us face the challenges that global warming is bringing to the continent, from worsening droughts to flood management.

We are aware of the implementation and funding gaps presented by the conclusions, and are eager to work with you on overcoming these so that all energies are focused on the urgent objective of implementing the law. This work though must start with a strong commitment via the upcoming exchanges within and between the EU institutions to respect the conclusions of the fitness check and discard any revision of the Directive, so that we can all focus on the real issues: improving results on the ground, to reverse the serious loss of freshwater species and deliver healthy freshwater ecosystems in Europe.

Sincerely yours,

*AEMS - Ríos con Vida*

*Alsace Nature*

*Älvräddarnas Samorganisation*

*Anglerverband Niedersachsen e.V.*

*Angling Trust*

*American Rivers*

*APR*

*Arnika - Nature Conservation Program*

*Asociación Española de Operadores Públicos de Abastecimiento y Saneamiento (AEOPAS)*

*Asociația pentru Conservarea Diversității Biologice*

*Associação Natureza Portugal*

*Association Living Water*

*Bayrische Kanuverband*

*Big Jump*

*BirdLife Croatia BIOM Association*

*BirdLife Cyprus*

*BirdLife Europe*

*BirdLife Finland*

*BirdLife Austria*

*BirdWatch Ireland*

*Bond Beter Leefmilieu*

*BUND*

*BUND Naturschutz Bayern*

*CEEweb for Biodiversity*

*Centro Ibérico de Restauración Fluvial (CIREF)*

*Centro Italiano per la Riqualificazione Fluviale (Cirf)*

*Climate Express*

*Conservatoire d'espaces naturels d'Auvergne*

*Deutsche Angel Fischer Verband (DAFV)*  
*Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH)*  
*Deutscher Naturschutzring (DNR)*  
*DN - Denmark*  
*Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF)*  
*DUPAN*  
*Eau et Rivières de Bretagne*  
*EcoAlbania*  
*Eco-Schools Malta*  
*EuroNatur*  
*European Anglers Alliance (EAA)*  
*European Environmental Bureau (EEB)*  
*European Rivers Network (ERN)*  
*FLORON*  
*Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung*  
*France Nature Environnement (FNE)*  
*France Nature Environnement (FNPF)*  
*France Nature Environnement 04*  
*France Nature Environnement PACA*  
*France Nature Environnement Midi-Pyrénées*  
*FRANE*  
*Friends of the Earth Europe*  
*Friends of the Earth Hungary*  
*Fundacion Nueva Cultura del Agua (FNCA)*  
*Generation Earth*  
*GEOTA*  
*Gruene Liga*  
*IFOAM EU*  
*Italia Nostra*  
*Jeugdbond voor Natuur en Milieu (JNM)*  
*Landesbund für Vogelschutz in Bayern e.V.*  
*Legambiente Onlus*

*Lipu - BirdLife Italy*

*LPN*

*Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület (MME) / BirdLife Hungary*

*MEDSOS Network*

*MedWet*

*Mountaineering Association of Slovenia*

*NABU Naturschutzbund*

*Naturemwelt*

*Naturfreunde Deutschland*

*NaturFreunde NaturFreunde NRW*

*Nature Trust - FEE Malta*

*Naturschutzbund Österreich*

*Natuur en Milieufederaties*

*Natuurpunt*

*Ornithological Society "Naše ptice"*

*Österreichischer Alpenverein - ÖAV*

*Österreichischer Fischerei Verband*

*OTOP*

*Polish Ecological Club*

*Red Ciudadana para una Nueva Cultura del Agua en el Tajo/Tejo y sus Ríos*

*Rewilding Europe*

*RiverWatch*

*Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR)*

*Salmon & Trout UK*

*Save the Blue Heart of Europe*

*Save the Rivers Coalition*

*Seas at Risk*

*SEG*

*SPEA*

*SLL - Finnish Association for Nature Conservation*

*SVK - Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing (Suomen Vapaa-ajankalastajien Keskusjärjestö)*

*Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO)*  
*Societa' Italiana di Geologia Ambientale*  
*Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP)*  
*SOS/BirdLife Slovakia*  
*Sources et Rivières du Limousin*  
*Spinning Club Italia a.s.d.*  
*Sportfiskarna*  
*Sportvisserij Nederland*  
*Stichting DUPAN*  
*Sustainable Eel Group*  
*Sustainable Water Network*  
*Tour du Valat*  
*Touring Club Italiano*  
*Transylvanian Carpathia Society*  
*Umweltdachverband Österreich*  
*Umweltinstitut Muenchen*  
*Unipesca*  
*Verband Deutscher Sporttaucher (VDS) - German Underwater Federation*  
*Vogelbescherming Nederland*  
*WCL Blueprint for Water NGO coalition*  
*Wetlands International*  
*Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust*  
*World Fish Migration Foundation*  
*WWF-Adria*  
*WWF-Bulgaria*  
*WWF-Hungary*  
*WWF-Netherlands*  
*WWF Slovakia*  
*WWF-Austria*  
*WWF-Belgium*  
*WWF-Danube-Carpathian Programme*  
*WWF-European Policy Office*

*WWF-France*

*WWF-Germany*

*WWF-International*

*WWF-Italy*

*WWF-Poland*

*WWF-Portugal (Associação Natureza Portugal)*

*WWF-Romania*

*WWF-Slovakia*

*WWF-Spain*

*WWF-Sweden*

*Youth Network for River Action (YNRA)*

*Zero*