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 Természettudományi Egyesület (MME) / BirdLife Hungary
MEDSOS Network
MedWet
Mountaineering Association of Slovenia
NABU Naturschutzbund
Naturemacht
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
Umweltinstut Muenchen
Unipesca
Verband Deutscher Sportaucher (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)
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