



## POSITION PAPER

### CEIR's comments regarding the Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC

Date: Brussels, 22 September 2014
Referring to: DG Environment's Public Consultation on the quality of Drinking Water in the EU
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Pages: 2
Transparency Register ID no: 54018122087-6

### THE DRINKING WATER DIRECTIVE SHOULD BE REVIEWED TO IMPROVE THE MARKETING OF PRODUCTS IN CONTACT WITH DRINKING WATER IN EUROPE.

The Drinking Water Directive sets common threshold limits for the quality of drinking water and is now fully applicable<sup>1</sup>. As is the case for all European Directives, all Member States had to transpose it into their national legislation. The conclusion of section 5 of the European Commission "Synthesis Report on the Quality of Drinking Water in the EU examining the Member States reports for the period 2008-2010 under Directive 98/83/EC" states that the implementation dates are outdated and that a general revision is advised.

CEIR and its members represent the European taps and valves industry. We have long been and still are very concerned by the lack of harmonisation of national legislation and practices for placing "products in contact with drinking water" on the EU market. The current situation inhibits the free circulation of these products on the Union territory because of the lack of common European requirements and mutual recognition between Member States. In CEIR's opinion, the discrepancy in national transpositions of the Drinking Water Directive, and particularly of article 10, is the main reason behind today's situation on the EU market.

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<sup>1</sup> a 15-year transition period was granted for chemical parameters, see Annex I, Part B, note 4 of Directive 98/83/EC

Moreover, the core issue regulated by the Directive is the quality of drinking water. The inclusion of an unclear and unspecified responsibility of Member States regarding products in contact with drinking water (Article 10) does not serve the overall objective of the Directive. In particular, a link is created with the Construction Products Regulation, which has generated a huge amount of work at standardisation level (on Mandate M/136) with limited results and with no certainty that the creation of harmonised standards will solve the existing issues on the market.

Therefore, and in order to resolve this long-standing and increasingly complex situation, CEIR recommends that the issue of products in contact with drinking water is removed from the Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC and transformed into a new, dedicated and comprehensive European Regulation, based on Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This might facilitate harmonisation of implementation in all Member States.

CEIR suggests that a uniform EU product certification system would support the manufacturer's declaration on product safety. However, and based on the satisfactory level of the quality of drinking water in Europe, CEIR considers that third-party certification would not be necessary and would not provide an additional guarantee on safety. Conformity should be subject to self-declaration, and rely on mutual recognition by other Member States. The existing approval schemes would be adapted and standardised, and would no longer constitute technical barriers to trade.

In summary, CEIR recommends:

- The transformation of Article 10 of the Drinking Water Directive into a new European Regulation
- The self-declaration of materials, components and product safety and fitness
- Mutual recognition of material, component and product certification improvements.

*The European Association for the Taps and Valves Industry – CEIR - was formed in 1959 as the European federation of national manufacturer associations. CEIR gathers together a large number of European manufacturers in the field of valves and fittings. It supports the principles of a free economy and private enterprise in Europe as well as on a global basis. CEIR represents the common economic, technical and scientific interests of the European valve industries, in particular towards international authorities and in economic and commercial circles.*