



*“Micro-pollutants represent nowadays the most alarming concern for water quality”*  
**Michel Dantin, MEP**

**EU decision-makers and stakeholders gathered in the European Parliament to discuss the issue of micro-pollutants in water, an increasingly important aspect that can have worrisome impacts on nature and human health, if not dealt with a comprehensive approach.**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October **MEP Michel Dantin** hosted a breakfast meeting in the European Parliament in Strasbourg to gather Parliamentarians and stakeholders and discuss about the necessity of putting in place effective measures to identify micro-pollutants that are present in water, control them, and remove them from the environment.

The panel of speakers was heterogeneous and represented several actors that deal with this issue from different perspectives. **Olivier Perceval** represented the French National Office for Water and Aquatic Environment; **Bruno Tisserand** spoke on behalf of EurEau, the European association of drinking water and waste water services; **Jean-Luc Ventura** took the floor for the Water Treatment department of SUEZ France, and **Andrew Farmer** represented the Institute for European Environmental Policy.

It was recognised that micro-pollutants enter the aquatic environment from different sources. **Mr Perceval** explained that in the case of France, the biggest source of micro-pollutants in surface waters is plant protection products. Therefore, he called for a reduction of the emissions of these substances, but at the same time he stressed the need to *“Identify and prioritise pollutants for which action is needed”*.

**Bruno Tisserand**, President of EurEau, stated that *“a source-control strategy is necessary and it has to be based on the two principles of precaution and polluter-pays”*, since end-of-pipe treatments, using the latest available technology, have to be considered a means of last resort as they are not economically nor environmentally sustainable. **Jean-Luc Ventura**, Director of SUEZ Water Treatment for France, called for a strengthening of the knowledge base at the European level, on the basis of what has been done for example in France, where a common data base on micro-pollutants has been set up and outlined the innovative treatment technologies.

By focusing on the European regulatory framework, **Andrew Farmer**, Director of Research and Head of Industry, Waste and Water Programme at IEEP, explained that legislation gaps exist for pharmaceuticals substances, and especially veterinary products that are released directly into the environment, not passing by end-of-pipe treatment. Noting the difficulties to have a comprehensive and effective regulatory framework in place, Mr Farmer called for action to close those existing gaps.

To conclude, **Michel Dantin**, MEP and chair of the working group ‘Agriculture and Water Management’ of the EP Intergroup on *“Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”*, observed that the European Water Framework Directive is a regulatory text that is not yet specifically prescriptive on the procedures to implement, and therefore is able to adapt to new



technological and scientific findings. On the other hand, interpretation gaps exist between the Member states, particularly on the "water status" of the Directive, and need to be addressed in the next future.

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