**The Commission stimulates water reuse in the EU for agricultural irrigation**

On 28 May 2018 the European Commission adopted a new legislative proposal for a Regulation on minimum requirements for water reuse. The Commission proposes new rules in order to stimulate and facilitate water reuse in the EU for agricultural irrigation. The new rules will help farmers use in the best way non-potable waste water, thus reducing water scarcity and protecting the environment and human health.

The main elements of the proposal are:

* Introduction of minimum requirements for the reuse of purified waste water from urban waste water treatment plants, which include requirements for microbiological parameters and monitoring for the purposes of routine monitoring;
* risk management, through which all additional risks should be treated to ensure safe water reuse;
* increased transparency – the public will have online access to information about the practice of waste water reuse in the respective member state.

Currently water reuse in the EU is far below its potential, irrespective of the fact that the energy needed for the abstraction and conveyance of fresh water is much higher. In addition, one-third of the EU territory suffers from water scarcity throughout the whole year. The ever more unpredictable meteorological phenomena, including prolonged droughts, are likely to lead to negative consequences on the quantity as well as the quality of fresh water resources. The new rules aim to ensure that we use purified waste water from urban waste water treatment plants in the best way, providing a reliable alternative water supply. Creating benefit from non-potable water, the new rules will also contribute to saving economic and ecological expenses connected with the construction of a new water supply.

Work on the legislative proposal commenced during the Bulgarian presidency and will continue during the Austrian presidency. Among the main issues which come out as sensitive for member states should be mentioned the additional administrative burden, the possibility for receiving transitional periods before the introduction of the new requirements and for the implementation of a different approach to urban waste water treatment plant operators on the basis of their capacity.