

CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF WATER POLICY

Environmental Conference
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Hosted by



Gauche Unitaire Européenne/Gauche Verte Nordique
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Objective

To bring together some of the most active opponents to the trend of water privatisation to share experiences, analyse successful campaigns against water privatisation, and discuss effective models of public ownership and local control. To help support the fight to keep water a public resource under local control all over the world.

Contents

2. Introduction Francis Wurtz, GUE/NGL President
3. Conference overview
- 4-5. How water privatisation works : Riccardo PETRELLA
6. Fighting privatisation in the Nordic countries
- 7-9. Case studies: Spain, France, Ghana
10. Water management in practice: Amelia MOREY-STRÖMBERG
12. The WTO and privatisation: Shiney VARGHESE
13. Further information

Introduction

Francis WURTZ, GUE/NGL President

I would like to thank all of you for coming along to participate in this conference where we will be discussing water, something universal and emblematic. It is universal in every sense of the word and something we find throughout the world. It is a common heritage of all humanity.



Left to right: Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ, Francis WURTZ, Riccardo PETRELLA

Nonetheless, 1.5 billion inhabitants of this earth do not have access to water and that situation is likely to become more and more serious unless something changes. And 30,000 die every day as a result of consuming contaminated water. So that is another element of this planetary apartheid, which should have been done away with by the year 2000. That was our previous agreement, and now in Johannesburg we have put off for another 20 years our commitment to putting an end to this scourge. Water is also a universal issue because it is something which affects our society and our civilisation in various different ways.

Water is an influence on human rights in the strongest sense of the word. It also has an impact on health, on life itself, on our ecosystem and the durability of our ecosystem, on security and peace and on conflict. For example, it is one element of the conflict in the Middle East. Culture is another area linked to water, as is development co-operation, from local levels in the countries through which the major rivers flow, right up to

the global level when we are talking about multilateral negotiations.

Public services are also affected, for example, in the environmental field. Pollution and decontamination are important, as well as connecting people up to water pipes and water treatment plants. Politics and ethics also play a role and that is the whole subject area we are going to explore today and tomorrow together. We will look specifically at the commercialisation of this market and privatisation and the different forms of privatisation in the sector.

Finally, we had invited the European Commission to come along and speak to us at this conference. But the Commission replied that it could not come along as it felt it had to maintain a neutral stance. Our staff members found a document announcing a colloquium in which the Commission is to take part along with representatives of private interests, which were described as their most effective partners. So I think the Commission has developed a whole new concept of neutrality. We, however, would prefer transparency.



Left to right: Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ, Francis WURTZ, Riccardo PETRELLA, Juan LOPEZ DE URALDE

Conference overview

Did the direction of water policy change?

No, we did not succeed in changing the direction of water policy with our conference. But we gathered some of the most active opponents to the trend of privatisation. We learned from case studies from around the world and, in working groups, we focused on key areas where we are seeking to make change.



Conference Participants

What did we do?

- Shared experiences of water privatisation programmes and how to resist and defeat them,
- Discussed effective models of public ownership and local control,
- Networked and promoted future co-operation among conference participants.

Why?

Across the globe, multinational corporations are gaining control of the most basic of necessities, water. Local control over water is too rare. We agreed that access to clean and plentiful water is a basic right. We must reject an economic programme through which everything comes to be viewed as a commodity to be traded. Such a strategy seeks to control the world's resources for the benefit of a few rather than the good of all.

Who were we?

Speakers:

Riccardo PETRELLA, Comité Mondial de l'Eau
Juan LOPEZ DE URALDE, Greenpeace, Spain
Raymond AVRILLIER, Grenoble, France
Kwesi OWUSU, Ghana
Shiney VARGHESE, USA
Amelia MOREY-STRÖMBERG, Sweden
Angel AZNAR, Spain

Members of the European Parliament present included:

Sylviane AINARDI, France
Pernille FRAHM, Denmark
Laura GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ, Spain
Alain KRIVINE, France
Luisa MORGANTINI, Italy
Jonas SJÖSTEDT, Sweden
Francis WURTZ, France

We welcomed many more than a hundred participants including representatives from international and national environmental and development organisations. Environmental activists from around Europe were present, mainly from Sweden, Italy and Denmark. Those representing regional offices from different parts of Europe, but particularly Spain, also took an interest.

Annual conference

In order to raise awareness of environmental issues and promote a dialogue between politicians and civil society at all levels, the GUE/NGL Group arranges an annual international environmental conference in Brussels. The conferences are held in the European Parliament in Brussels with interpretation to the official languages of the European Union. The fifth conference will be held in the autumn of 2003. Earlier conferences have dealt with issues of globalisation, financial institutions and the WTO.

The water privatisation agenda: How it works and how to beat it
Riccardo PETRELLA

"To fight privatisation successfully we first need to understand the mechanisms at work" is Riccardo Petrella's starting point. Without our own understanding of what is happening, we are left with the arguments of the other side. He attributes the strength of the privatisation forces at work today to three sets of factors.

HOW IT WORKS

Ideological factors

In recent years, privatisation has been promoted by questioning the capabilities of the public sector, which has been undermined by the repetition of a number of statements and the creation of an ideological climate has been created. Petrella gave examples of statements being used:

- The public sector does not have strong resources. This statement is being used to promote the privatisation agenda. Petrella went on to give other examples of statements being used.
- The public sector does not have the necessary capacity. It is not flexible enough and cannot provide the quality required.
- The public sector is financially ineffective due to its inability to adequately distribute resources. Corrupt and inefficient.
- The private sector can quickly and efficiently adapt to changing demands. The public sector cannot.

True or not these statements have tarnished the image of the public sector to the extent that the general public now accepts that the assertions made by those with an agenda of privatisation are correct.

Economic-political factors

Petrella highlights that when water distribution is discussed, "needs" and "demands" are key words. We now rarely hear water described as a human right. There has been an ideological shift from speaking of rights to speaking of needs. He sees this as linked to the liberalisation of the economies in

Europe, which started in the 1970's and which has now spread to many sectors of the economy. He blames the logic of the European internal market within the European Economic Community (EEC) for contributing to the privatisation agenda. It is the second strongest economic-political factor he identifies. The expansion and strengthening of the internal market has meant that national monopolies are undesirable. The public service sector as a whole has been weakened.



Riccardo PETRELLA

Alliance of four major groups

The strength of today's water privatisation agenda is also due to the alliance that has formed between four political actors: the private sector; the Bretton Woods institutions—the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; the agencies of the United Nations (UN); and, the scientific community.

Petrella calls this alliance the "oligarchy of water" whose members are all working to legitimise the water privatisation agenda. He mentions two obvious examples of the alliances formed: the World Water Council (WWC) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP). The WWC is a think-tank whose main task is to provide decision-makers with advice and assistance on global water issues. The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is a working partnership among all those involved in water management: government agencies, public institutions, private companies, professional organisations, and multilateral development agencies.

BEATING PRIVATISATION

Water is a human right

Our focus needs to change direction, says Petrella. Water is much more than a need to be satisfied. It is also more than a new evolving business sector. It is a vital resource that cannot become a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder. We too rarely hear water described as a human right. At the United Nation Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August 2002 water is included in the final political declaration adopted where it is called a "basic requirement". The water privatisation agenda will only be strengthened if water is mainly viewed as a need to be satisfied, because that could turn water policy into a question of whether the public or private sector should be satisfying the need. This is linked to the liberalisation agenda. Petrella says, "Water, sunshine and air are common resources and access to them should be seen as basic human rights."

Action needed

There are three important areas where action needs to be taken - GATS, European Public Services and CAP, says Petrella. The policy determined in these areas will be decisive in the fight against water privatisation.

GATS

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has played a key role in opening up markets for transnational corporations by promoting privatisation and the export of goods and services. That's why the WTO was created in 1995. It does so by creating and enforcing an extensive body of international trade rules. Under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), water is considered to be a "service". A new round of GATS negotiations started in 2002 and will be completed 2005.

European Public Services

Many European Public Services are under threat. The dismantling of national monopolies has led to access for private companies to provide services such as electricity and telecommunication. Petrella stresses that market access for private companies is seldom questioned as the necessary outcome of the abolition of

national monopolies. He states that in actual fact this is not the only possible development. Petrella's opinion is that getting rid of national monopolies instead should lead to the creation of a strong European public sector.

Agricultural Policy

There is a huge amount of money being paid every year to the agricultural sector from the EU budget. Petrella estimates that a third of this annual budget would be enough to realise the most important goal set by the Johannesburg summit - to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and without adequate sanitation.



Riccardo PETRELLA

He points out that the EU is financing an agriculture that is unsustainable and damaging to the environment. 70% of the world's water is used in agriculture that is intensive and unsustainable. Petrella concludes that while we still need to channel resources to agriculture, it needs to be done in a very different way.

Working Group: Fighting privatisation in the Nordic countries

Focus

The working group concluded that the key to fighting privatisation is access to information. But it is a matter of not only getting hold of documents, but also understanding the details of what has happened. Norrköping, Sweden, is a municipality where water has been privatised.

Information sharing

We need to be able to keep each other up to date on the progress we are making. An organisation such as Attac or a political party could perhaps provide a space on their websites where information on water can be exchanged.

Intervene early

It was agreed that it was crucial to intervene at the earliest possible stage. Not wait until the stage of having to buy back what was once publicly owned. The process towards privatisation often moves from organising the water work into a conglomerate, then making public companies and finally privatising these companies.

Method of privatisation

It is necessary to be clear about what has actually happened. Has water really been entirely privatised? What has been sold? Has the management of water been delegated to a private company? Is it for a limited period of time?

Fact-finding

It is important to understand the financial and economic aspects, so it is useful to establish a clear idea of ownership structure and identify the links. How is the private firm making money? What is the ownership structure of the company? Technical, legal and environmental details are essential also. The documentation of the state of affairs when the private company takes over management is important. This data needs to be comprehensive and include details about the condition of all installations. This needs to

be available so a fair comparison can be made between privately and publicly run water works since the level of investment may be different.



Left to right: Helén ENGHOLM, Jonas RINGQVIST, Jenny FORS

Ways forward

- There may be a need to strengthen the laws that govern the right to water.
- If water consumers are well informed, they can play an active role.
- Buying the private company Sydkraft with public money was one idea suggested.
- It is important to keep our eyes on our national development agencies and what demands they are making on countries when it comes to privatisation of water.
- Protecting water is essential. Poor water quality means that the public sector has fewer resources.
- It is important to bear in mind the triangle of actors - the scientific community, courts and civil society.

Case Study: Spain - Mobilising the public and focusing on legalities
Juan Lopez de Uralde & Angel Anzar

Background

The Spanish government adopted the Spanish National Hydrological Plan (SNHP) in June 2001. This plans the building of 120 new dams and foresees transfers of water from the River Ebro to the southeast of Spain and from the River Rhône to Barcelona. Public opinion mobilised against the plan for many reasons, mainly environmental and social. A Platform for the Defence of the River Ebro was established and many other non-governmental organisations are involved. Representatives from Greenpeace and the Platform for the Defence of the River Ebro shared experiences during the conference.



Juan LOPEZ de URALDE: President of Greenpeace Spain

Opposition to the plan

What helped to build and mobilise opposition to the Plan?

- High profile, peaceful demonstrations, which worked to highlight the problems.
- Focusing on the legal aspects and bringing the case to the attention of the EU Institutions
- Arguing the case for breach of many environmental laws on water, wildlife, and environmental impact assessment
- Analysing the environmental impact assessment report submitted after the adoption of the SNHP, and highlighting its shortcomings
- Understanding and highlighting the beneficiaries, in this case agriculture, hydro-electric companies and property developers
- Misuse of public and EU funds for the benefit of private enterprise and asking the Commission not to grant funding for the project



Angel AZNAR: Platform for the Defence of the River Ebro

Development Agencies Working Group

Focus

How can we counter development agencies that encourage privatisation as an aspect of "good governance" and thus a condition for debt relief?

The working group looked at:

- The situation on the ground in developing countries where water shortages are a daily reality and the gender dimension to this problem, where it is women who suffer most.
- The problems with the fact that the process of privatisation is being either imposed or is invisible to many, as in Ghana (see case study)
- The role of international institutions: both the World Bank and the IMF impose privatisation as a precondition for funding assistance.

Conclusion

Developing countries are in a weak negotiating position and often have no choice but to accept conditions on loans or aid. So how can this be improved? There are basic issues, such as the extremely detailed nature of the financial packages, which only make sense to experts. Building alternative models to social ownership. Many do not regard state property as their own—same problem exists in the North, therefore, there is a need to find creative alternatives, such as models of public ownership which also empower.

Case study: France - Victory for the Grenoble Citizens' Movement Raymond Avrillier

In Grenoble, it took fourteen years to get water back in public hands. Water was privatised through a form of privatisation typical for France, which entails delegating the management of water to private companies. Corruption was proved and the contract signed with a private company in 1989 for 25 years was annulled. Patience was an important virtue and the activists had to wait for eight years before they saw the impact of their work.

Avrillier highlighted the following as essential for the success of the campaign

- Access to information and reliable financial information,
- Uncovering corruption,
- Pluralist expert analyses,
- Public debate
- Eliciting clear information about choices made.

The public sector can do a good job but it is important that there is a clear link to the citizens. It is, therefore, important to have an annual report on the price and the quality of water. Another report should be made for the price and quality of wastewater treatment.

Who controls the data? Who produces the studies on which decisions are based?

Avrillier points out that in Grenoble €100,000 had been spent on expert studies in order to get the water works back in public hands. The money saved however is many million euros. He also considers the keeping of impeccable records of all investigations to be crucial.

Continuity and equality

The public sector can give a continuity that private firms cannot offer. Water is a sector where the long-term perspective is what counts. In terms of achieving equality, the public sector is better equipped to ensure that all people have access to water. The public sector also has an immense capacity to meet new situations and needs.

Basic contradiction

At the global level and also for each of us it is important not to over-consume water. In

fact, our use of water needs to be decreased. It is possible for the public sector to encourage people to use less water and at the same time ensure that long-term goals are met. For private companies, it is impossible to do anything but strive to make a short-term profit. They cannot take responsibility for decreasing consumption of water. It is in their interest that we always use as much water as possible.



Raymond AVRILLIER

Top tricks in the Privatisation Swindle

Undermining legitimacy

Reports from Spain of police provocation at demonstrations. In France, efforts were made to isolate and discredit Avrillier, which ended in a jail sentence for a French politician.

Privatisation: a dirty word!

Governments all over the world attempt to obscure truth through language. Never say privatise, rather delegate, redistribute, modernise ... Their favourite expression is public-private partnership.

Paying lip service to consultation

In Ghana, the civil society consultation involved 'select' stakeholders, which included government institutions, parliamentarians, donors, the private sector and a few NGOs.

Tarnished images

The public now sees public authorities as old-fashioned, corrupt, bureaucratic, and unable to run a water supply system efficiently.

Information is power

Impeding or restraining access to information, thereby, undermining any proper debate.

Paying the piper to play the tune

In developing countries, recommendations from "experts" are from those favourable to and likely to profit from privatisation.

Case study: Ghana - Resisting privatisation and ensuring a safe, affordable water supply
Kwesi OWUSU

Background

The Ghana National Coalition against the Privatisation of Water was formed in May 2001 to oppose private sector participation (PSP) plan being promoted by the Ghanaian government and the World Bank. A final decision is due in March 2003.

Water and sanitation services are currently run by a public body, the Ghana Water Company Limited, relying on a 1940s water infrastructure that needs serious investment. The government's plan would be to lease urban water systems to private companies who would invest between \$70-\$140 million.

The Ghanaian government would be responsible for renewal and expansion of the water infrastructure at a cost of some \$130 billion. All pre-qualified bidders are the "usual suspects", the largest multinational water companies.



Kwesi OWUSU

Failings in the plan

Some of the failings in the Government's plan were highlighted as follows:

- Private companies would be responsible for water services, but not sanitation.
- Inequality of investment commitment between the government and private companies.

- No plans for low-income consumers and 78% would remain outside the piped water network.
- Ghana's debt burden may be increased rather than decreased.
- Private companies will profit from selling water *and* be paid for managing the system.
- A proposal to consolidate the water infrastructure network first where strongest before considering expansion, meaning the poor will see no improvement in the short-term.
- No role for the Ghanaian private sector. Moreover, local technical expertise in the engineering field was completely overlooked.
- The consultation process with civil society primarily involved key 'select' stakeholders, and, was neither representative nor complete.
- Lack of transparency and access to information impeded the participation of civil society, compounding fears that the process was not wholly legitimate
- 50% of the workers from the public water body would be made redundant. However, there was no consultation with trade unions during the course of the entire study on restructuring the water sector (1994-1995)

Priorities

Campaign priorities for the final months:

- Highlighting the scandalous nature of the proposal deal and the fact that it goes against all poverty alleviation priorities proposed by the World Bank and the IMF. It does not ensure safe and affordable water to all; in fact, it is more likely to penalise the poor.
- Putting pressure on the government to rethink. Debt relief for Ghana is conditional upon the privatisation of water, meaning that it has little room to manoeuvre.
- Campaigning for fresh consultation with civil society on alternative approaches
- Continuing to mobilise public opinion against the privatisation deal.

Water management in practice Amelia MOREY-STRÖMBERG

A familiar concept is the cycle of water in nature, which includes rivers, seas and rainfall. But not many have heard about the water cycle in society, which was the subject of Amelia Morey-Strömberg's speech. She convinced us that privatisation goes against the natural cycle of water and that we should look at the water cycle in society in order to make effective decisions on how to manage water. Amelia is an engineer at the water works of the municipality Gävle, Sweden.



Amelia MOREY-STRÖMBERG

Water in Sweden

Sweden is a privileged country with regard to water access per capita. 1500-ml rain is received annually and there are nine million inhabitants in Sweden. The country was urbanised quite late and that was when water first became polluted. Drinking water distribution became necessary.

Later, lakes were polluted by sewage. Between 1940 and 1970, the water treatment works of Sweden were built. Since the conference in Rio in 1992 and with the new knowledge acquired, water is seen as an important resource even if there is plenty in Sweden.

Where is water found?

The source of water can be found below ground, as is the case of Gävle. We take up water from wells and distribute it with almost no treatment needed. Water can also be found at the surface of a river, for example, where it not only supplies water to households and industry, but is also used for

transport. Sometimes, it is even shared among several countries.

Industrialised society

The problem is that water does not exist in a vacuum, but in an industrialised society, where it can be polluted through spills from oil tankers, the effects of agriculture or by simple things, such as paint or a car wash. One teaspoon of cyanide is enough to destroy the water resources of 100,000 people. In Sweden, there are designated areas of special importance for water resources. Here restrictions are imposed, such a ban on pesticides.

How to treat water

The question of which type of process to be used to treat water is based on the quality of the "raw" water and then the best possible technique is chosen. In Gävle, it is enough to use ozone to treat the water, but it is not as easy everywhere. In some parts of Germany, 37 steps are necessary to produce clean water.

Treating sewage

Sewage is cleaned in two steps. First the water itself must be cleaned and then the sludge needs to be cleaned, so it can be used within agriculture or the forest. It is important to protect sewage water since it will be used at a later stage. Campaigns are organised to inform people that toilets are made to handle only certain specific types of waste. It is important not to use more cleaning products than necessary because this can seriously disrupt the biological processes of the water treatment works. If all of this works together, then one can speak of the water cycle in society.

Effects of privatisation

Privatisation breaks the cycle. A problem arises if part of the cycle of water in society is privatised. If water treatment is privatised, then the private company will give priority to producing water. They can invest in as much technology as they want because they can raise the price of water as much as they want.

In the case of Norrköping in Sweden, water was privatised by creating a conglomerate encompassing both energy works and the water works of the municipality. The energy works was interested in using the waste

product of the treatment as a source of energy. They were not concerned by pollution of the water. In fact, if there was oil in the sludge, this made the waste product more interesting from an energy point of view.

How to circumvent privatisation

Morey-Strömberg concluded with two examples of how to avoid privatisation.

In Gävle, Sweden, there were plans to create a conglomerate between the energy—and water—and waste works of the municipality as well as selling parts of these to the private sector. Through mobilising public opinion, most importantly the local trade unions, the plans were withdrawn.

The second example used was from a village in northern Argentina, her former home country. All water treatment there had been taken over by a private company. The water prices had been raised by 60%. People started a campaign where they refused to pay for water.

The company took them to court and as result they lost their homes because they could not pay their debts. The company was pleased when it owned 40 houses, but not by the time it owned 4000 houses. The company eventually returned the water works to the public sector that now runs it.

The WTO and Privatisation **Shiney VARGHESE**

Since the early 1990s financial institutions such as the World Bank have promoted privatisation as a solution to the global water crisis. The pace of privatisation has been steadily increasing. Shiney Varghese of the Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy based in Minneapolis, USA, presented the latest developments and what role the EU and in particular the EU Commission is playing.

Background

Varghese points out that water supply was long perceived as the state's responsibility and was provided at highly subsidised rates. The focus was on supply rather than demand, which tended to encourage unlimited consumption. We need to change this around, privilege basic needs over luxury and punish polluters.



Shiney VARGHESE, Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy USA

Push towards privatisation

The push towards privatisation of water services is very much influenced by the well-organised private water utility sector, increasingly dominated by a handful of transnational corporations (most of them based in the European Union). The global water market is estimated to be worth 800 billion USD for the year 2000, says Varghese.

Institutional support

Two key sets of institutions support the privatisation trend. Varghese chooses to speak mainly about the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at this conference. But the Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank are crucial especially in the context of developing

countries, since the loan conditions often push for privatisation.

Concerns of civil society

The WTO was established at the end of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations in 1994. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is one of fifteen agreements. One of the concerns of civil society about the WTO rules is that they will curtail the national space available to legislate in the interest of ecological sustainability, equity or national food security. "The WTO tends to view trade in isolation from environmental and social impacts", according to Varghese.

Once you are in

Inclusiveness and irreversibility are main features of GATS according to Varghese. Countries are allowed to choose which services they want to include in the agreement, but the choice is less real than it seems. Art 6.4 means that all service sector regulations can be contested. Once a country accepts the GATS agreement, they cannot back out on their commitments.

No exceptions

For the environment there is no exception. The limited exception that the WTO provides for in its rules is that stricter environmental protection rules may be enacted when life or health is at risk. Varghese points out "Measures to address wetland erosion of fresh water quality would not fall within the GATS exception". They would be illegal and open to challenge under WTO rules.

Water - a commodity

Water itself is defined as a commodity under WTO rules. Under the list of "goods" we can find "waters, including natural or artificial water and aerated waters". The operation of water pipelines, ships etc. to supply bulk water, municipal systems for sewer and water supply are all services that could be included under GATS. "If these water services are included in GATS and the provision is to be applied in various countries, I am afraid that the water crisis will be aggravated, especially in the developing countries, where privatisation is likely to be poorly regulated" says Varghese.

Role of the European Commission

The EU has requested the USA to:

- make unlimited commitments under water supply services, which would entail the elimination of public monopolies and government subsidies reserved exclusively for domestic suppliers,
- remove the limitation they have on the liberalisation of certain environmental services to "privately contracted services".

Deregulation

The European Commission insists that the GATS negotiations are about trade in services not deregulation. However, the EU has played a particular role in promoting the drafting of new, binding GATS restraints on domestic regulation. These restraints go further than even the USA is willing to go.

Threat to public services

The Commission claims that the GATS negotiations do not threaten public services because, in combination with the right regulatory framework, market opening can improve public services and because governments retain the right to limit their commitments.

In the name of the poor

Private sector involvement in the water sector is often advanced in the name of the poor, most of whom are located in the developing world. 90% of those water-poor are located in rural areas. Multinational-led privatisation will focus primarily on providing water services in urban areas.

Let the WTO decide

In a Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue meeting in Washington DC, USA, the EU and US representatives said they were willing to leave it to a WTO dispute panel to decide to what degree the governmental authority exemption protected public services.

Accountable

Varghese concludes that the EU is seeking other countries to provide unlimited commitments in the area of water supply services. The EU should be held accountable for this.

Web pages on Water

Water news

www.waterobservatory.org
www.canadians.org/blueplanet
www.tradeobservatory.org
www.waterwatch.org.uk
www.eausecours.org
www.globalissues.org/Enviissues/Biodiversity/Water

Trade Unions and organisations

www.world-psi.org
www.psiru.org
www.corporateeurope.org
www.corpwatch.org
www.france.attac.org (English available)
www.foeeurope.org
www.foei.org
www.epsu.org
www.polarisinstitute.org
www.eeb.org
www.greenpeace.org

GATS

www.gatswatch.org
www.wdm.org.uk/campaign/GATS
www.citizen.org/trade/wto/gats/

News OWUSU

www.isodec.org.gh
www.isodec.org.gh/isodec/ncap

News AVRILLIER

www.france-asso.com/ades/

News VARGHESE

www.waterobservatory.org

News LOPEZ

www.greenpeace.es

Institutions

www.wto.org
www.unep.org
www.europa.eu.int
www.europarl.eu.int

Other

www.worldwatercouncil.org
www.gwpforum.org

EU Commission wants to know what you think

While the European Commission continues to keep its GATS requests and offers secret, there is now a public consultation document available on the Commission's website. The deadline for comments is 10 January 2003: www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade/services

Kyoto meeting in March 2003

From the 16th to the 23rd of March is the meeting of the World Water Council. The meetings are held every three years and include thousands of participants. Their previous meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, promoted so-called private-public partnership as the solution to the global water crisis. www.worldwaterforum.org

UN Freshwater year 2003

On 20 December 2000, the United Nations declared 2003 the International Year of Freshwater and urged all nations and UN organisations to call public attention to the value of freshwater and to take necessary action to protect it and use it wisely.

