



PRESS RELEASE

EFBW AND EUREAU ISSUE JOINT POSITION STATEMENT ON FRACKING AND THE PROTECTION OF UNDERGROUND WATER RESOURCES

EUROPEAN NATURAL MINERAL WATER AND SPRING WATER PRODUCERS AND WATER SERVICE PROVIDERS JOIN FORCES TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF EUROPEAN AUTHORITIES TO THE NEED TO ADEQUATELY PROTECT UNDERGROUND WATER RESOURCES IN THE CONTEXT OF SHALE GAS EXPLOITATION.

BRUSSELS, 18th of June 2015. On the occasion of the EFBW conference on 'Fracking and the protection of underground water resources' held on the 17th of June in Spa, Belgium, the European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) and EurEau, the voice of the water sector, released today a joint position statement highlighting the need to assess the risks associated with shale gas exploitation via hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and urging for the prohibition of fracking activities in catchment areas around underground water resources.

'Water utilities and bottled water producers in Europe are committed to source protection and to delivering safe and high quality water to European consumers. The risks to underground water resources are real and therefore they need to be adequately assessed and addressed', says Carl-Emil Larson, EurEau President.

EFBW President, Jean-Pierre Deffis, states that *'EFBW and EurEau welcome the European Commission's ongoing efforts to assess the potential impacts of fracking. We strongly believe that specific binding provisions must be adopted at EU level, including the prohibition of fracking activities in catchment areas around underground water resources. This is of particular importance for natural mineral waters, which by law must demonstrate 'original purity' and may not be chemically treated.'*

Please see the full position statement at the end of the press release.

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Joint position statement on shale gas extraction and the protection of underground water resources

By the European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) and EurEau, the voice of the European water sector

European natural mineral and spring water producers and drinking water service providers join forces to draw the attention of European authorities to the need to adequately protect underground water resources in the context of shale gas exploitation.

Whilst unconventional fossil fuels are already commercially vastly exploited in some parts of the world, particularly in North America, only limited exploration operations have taken place in the European Union. It is therefore the moment to assess the risks associated with shale gas exploitation via hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and make sure an adequate regulatory framework is in place before exploration and exploitation activities are further developed.

One of the areas of particular concern in the context of fracking is the protection and preservation of underground water resources. Natural mineral water and spring water producers, as well as utility drinking water suppliers, are committed to source protection and to delivering safe and high quality water to European consumers.

Any contamination of protected underground water sources could impact consumer confidence in water quality. This is particularly relevant in the case of natural mineral waters, which by law must demonstrate 'original purity' at source and may not be chemically treated.

The European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) and EurEau, the European water sector, welcome the European Commission's ongoing efforts to assess the potential impact of fracking whether via the JRC's work or via stakeholder consultations, including the current '*Study on the application in relevant member states of the Commission Recommendation on minimum principles for the exploration and production of hydrocarbons (such as shale gas) using HVHF (High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing)*'.

Existing EU legislation does not cover the risks arising from the exploration for and extraction of unconventional gas specifically. Therefore EFBW and EUREAU welcome any new, comprehensive legislative framework and/or guidelines from the European Commission to clarify the application of the existing EU legislation on this topic.

One of the key elements for future regulations should be the prohibition of any exploration and exploitation fracking activity in catchment areas around underground water resources, whether used for public supply or for bottling natural mineral and spring waters.

Underground water resources are a vital, precious and limited resource. All measures must be taken to guarantee their availability and their quality for the generations to come.

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BACKGROUND: FRACKING METHOD

The economic development of unconventional natural gas reservoirs requires the use of the so called 'fracking' (hydraulic fracturing) method. Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside. Water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure which allows the gas to flow out to the head of the well. The process is carried out vertically or, more commonly, by drilling horizontally to the rock layer. (Reference: www.bbc.com)

NOTES TO THE EDITORS:

About EFBW

The European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) is the voice of the bottled water industry, dedicated to promoting the unique qualities of natural mineral and spring water among EU institutions and international organisations. EFBW is a registered international not for profit trade association with a membership base of national trade associations and direct member companies. In total, EFBW represents almost 600 natural mineral and spring water producers in Europe. EFBW offers expertise in regulatory issues, scientific and technical affairs as well as matters relating to health and the environment. www.efbw.org

About EurEau

EurEau is the voice of Europe's water sector. We represent public and private drinking and waste water service providers. Our members are the national water service associations from 27 European countries. We bring sector professionals together to discuss quality, resource efficiency and access to water for Europe's citizens and businesses. Employing around 500,000 people, the sector makes a significant contribution to the European economy. www.eureau.org

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