

## **AGREEMENT FOR A PUBLIC AND DEMOCRATIC WATER SYSTEM**

Barcelona's city growth obliged it to expand beyond its own walls and expand onto the Eixample district. Since then, the management of water resources has mainly been in private hands and has grown in this way throughout the majority of towns and cities of the larger Metropolitan Area. Despite this fact, in 2010 a Barcelona court ruled that there was no public contracting situation to regulate this management. Two years on in 2012 the government of Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona (AMB) created a mixed company as partners with Sociedad General de Agua de Barcelona (AGBAR group) to manage the urban water cycle of supply and sanitation.

In 2016, the mixed partnership was cancelled by the Supreme Court of Catalonia (TSJC) due to various irregularities: there had been no reasoning as to why the mixed partnership was the better option, besides the contract was "passed on" -conceded without public tender- the private part of the mixed venture, and finally, the valuation of assets was tipped very obviously in AGBAR's favor. The court ruling by the TSJC will be considered in the next months by the Supreme Court of Spain, which is under the obligation of reaching a final verdict. If this verdict rules against the mixed company, this would make a perfect opportunity to make the water system public again for the communities of AMB<sup>1</sup>.

### **An opportunity to make the water system public:**

The remunicipalisation of water systems is a worldwide tendency that considers that an essential human right such as the access to water and sanitation should never be the object of lucrative business. For this reason it proposes the recovery of this resource that is now in hands of the AGBAR Corporation. In claiming the return of the water system to local government hands, not only do we wish for management to pass from private to public hands, but also we demand direct citizen participation in the water service to guarantee universal access to running water as well as guarantee accountability and transparency in the management and to preserve ecosystems present in water that are a source of life.

### **Our compromise:**

In name of the citizens of the municipalities of AMB, the neighborhood associations, social and green platforms, trade unions, foundations, universities, schools, hospitals, libraries, business places and all other public entities, corporate bodies and groups below signed, **we express our agreement with a public management model together with direct citizen participation for the water in AMB.**

To make this possible we commit to the following goals:

- Consider the access to water and sanitation a human right essential for life that can never be considered as profitable goods.
- Consider the access to water and sanitation as a public asset that requires public management and democratic governing as well as citizen involvement, transparency and accountability.
- Confront current challenges such as the preserving water masses and adaptation to climate change, maintenance of ecosystems on land and in water, territorial balance and food sovereignty, with supply for all citizens.
- Forge and consolidate a citizen's movement in favor of remunicipalisation of the water system and also in favor of a new model of management of public water that is participative and respectful to the environment.
- The creation of an observatory that watches for water management and sanitation as a common asset as described in the above points.

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<sup>1</sup> Badalona, Barcelona, Begues, Castelldefels, Cerdanyola, Cornellà de Llobregat, Esplugues de Llobregat, Gavà, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Montcada i Reixac, Montgat, Pallejà, El Papiol, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Sant Boi de Llobregat, Sant Climent de Llobregat, Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Sant Joan Despí, Sant Just Desvern, Santa Coloma de Cervelló, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Vicenç dels Horts, Torrelles de Llobregat i Viladecans.