



CALL NOTICE

Feasibility assessment for an EU-wide Wastewater Monitoring System for SARS-CoV-2 Surveillance

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the Directorate-General for Environment, are teaming up with the EU Hackathon's winners SEWERS4Covid (the Dutch Water Research Institute KWR, Eurecat – Technology Centre of Catalonia (Spain), University of Thessaly and National Technical University of Athens (Greece), and University of Exeter (UK) and the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule in Aachen RWTH (DE). Assisted by Water Europe and EurEau we call for participation in an *ad hoc* pan-European Feasibility Assessment aiming at exploring the development of a wastewater-based monitoring exercise for SARS-CoV-2 and exchange of experiences in SARS-CoV-2 monitoring in wastewater.

Evidence is increasing that untreated wastewater is a good indicator of the presence of the virus in a population. The ability to detect the current SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater is increasingly being reported independently by various research groups as a possible way to better quantify and understand its approximate overall presence in the population. Upon the first confirmation of the virus RNA appearing in stools of COVID-19 patients, research groups in the Netherlands, Australia, United States, France, Italy, Austria and elsewhere have successfully established a relationship between the virus's concentration in influents to wastewater treatment plant and the level of infection in the population in question. Thus, wastewater surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 eventually combined with the monitoring of pharmaceuticals used in the treatment of COVID-19 is likely to be a valuable and efficient tool to monitor virus circulation in EU cities and towns and could serve as early warning for re-emergence in Europe and beyond, providing also specific data analytics on the monitoring. In order to gather the ongoing efforts and to streamline protocols while facilitating the exchange of knowledge, interested research groups are invited to contact **immediately** the Joint Research Centre at JRC-WATERLAB@ec.europa.eu .

A spontaneous snapshot exercise is taking place employing a previously used EU-wide monitoring mechanism at a selected number of wastewater treatment plants (preferably with information about the infection levels in the connected catchment areas). This data and methods will be shared as a standard reference to enable the direct comparison between individual research activities that are taking place thus constituting a Wastewater Monitoring System for SARS-CoV-2. Participation in this exercise is free of charge and results generated will be exploited jointly. This includes the organisation of webinars and web-conferences once data are available.