



Whenever you open the tap, fill a glass of water and drink it, you probably do so without much thought. Now imagine you systematically would pour every fourth glass down the drain. This is actually a symbolic example of our water use - one fourth of our clean freshwater goes to waste. "How?", you might ask. The answer is quite simple: by flushing.

For instance, the average Dane uses around 30.1 litres of water per day simply by flushing his or her toilet. This makes up for 23 % of the total water consumed per person.

In Europe, Luxemburg tops the [waste list](#) with as much as 34 % of their water spent on flushing.

The European Commission, often accused of micromanaging, has actually prepared a [new initiative](#) for delivering an ecolabel for toilets. The initiative might be micromanaging, but certainly for a good cause. It will mean that toilets with less than six liters per flush are encouraged, which might result in very concrete savings as around 22 million toilet units are sold within the EU each year.

Spokesperson for British MEP Martin Callanan, the leader of the European Conservatives and Reformists group in the European Parliament, said: "There are more important things for the EU to be worried about than the capacity of toilet flushes." Danish MEP Margrete Auken, however, disagrees: "Eco labeling is very popular amongst the consumers, who want to shop more environmental, so I fully support the Ecolabel."

And according to Margrete Auken the normal European consumer will not see a difference, as the new environmental friendly toilets will still function just as well as the conventional toilets. "Even though the toilets save water, it will not be on expense of efficiency. Therefore people will not be able to see or notice a difference, except on their water bill", says Margrete Auken.

Solutions to excessive water loss through flushing is of course desirable. Putting an end to the waste all together would be even better – and is actually possible. Using rainwater for toilets is an emerging trend. This means a tank is installed in the ground, from which pipes lead the rainwater into a tank, where a filter is installed to eliminate leaves and small branches in the water. The rainwater is then pumped into the household. In addition to the sustainable and renewable aspect, there is also an economic bonus - once up and running, a rainwater tank can save around 800 € a year on a family's water bill.

In the newly constructed UN City in Copenhagen, the toilets are flushed an estimated 5,300 times a day. To save water, the UN City collects rainwater of the roof. Eight tanks have been installed in the basement and the toilets now use rainwater instead of drinking water. Through this initiative, combined with water saving innovative taps, the [UN City](#) has reduced its water use by 61%.

With millions of people worldwide lacking access not only to proper sanitation and toilets, but also to clean water, the time has come for Europeans to pay more attention to how we flush.