Question for written answer E-002920/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: Industry interests in environmental legislation and consequences of non-compliance

The state of EU surface waters remains critical, with fewer than 40 % achieving good ecological status and less than 30 % reaching good chemical status. In Denmark, only 29.9 % of surface waters are in good ecological status, and just 1.7 % are in good chemical status.

This lack of progress is closely tied to the widespread non-implementation of EU environmental law. The Commission's fourth Environmental Implementation Review estimates the annual cost of non-compliance at EUR 180 billion – about 1 % of EU gross domestic product. The report finds EU water directives broadly fit for purpose but poorly implemented.

In Denmark, the Ministry of Environment has long failed to set binding limits for several harmful substances, hindering proper water quality assessments. These include heavy metals and chemicals such as nickel, arsenic and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Internal ministry documents suggest economic concerns for industry have influenced decisions on whether, and to what extent, to comply with EU law.

1. How does the failure of Member States such as Denmark to set limit values affect enforcement and the overall effectiveness of the EU water directives?

2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure Member States uphold environmental law over industrial interests?

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