Question for written answer E-003758/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Niclas Herbst (PPE)

Subject: River passability and implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in Germany

I have received detailed information from Lower Saxony and Hamburg revealing late implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Despite the unambiguous legal obligation to the contrary, the Luhe River in Winsen has remained, impassible for fish for over 15 years. A fish passage (fish ladder) that had already been included in the planning approval process was temporarily removed because the interests of hydropower were given primacy over compliance with EU rules. Only after years of discussions and clarifications was the fish ladder allowed to remain. This case clearly shows that staff shortages, a lack of coordination between authorities and the prioritisation of individual economic interests lead to systematic delays.

1. What view does the Commission take of the slow implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Natura 2000 Regulation in Germany, particularly in view of the poor passability of rivers for fish?

2. What will it do to ensure that Member States such as Germany comply with their obligations in future?

3. Does the Commission intend to tighten guidelines on the use of hydropower in lowland waters?

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