

Question for written answer E-004682/2025

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Preserving the Water Framework Directive's integrity and ensuring its effectiveness

Adopted in 2000, the Water Framework Directive¹ (WFD) is a cornerstone of freshwater protection, a crucial climate adaptation instrument, and a key instrument of the Water Resilience Strategy.

However, 25 years after it was enacted, only 39.5 % of surface waters are in good ecological status². Experts point out that the lack of effectiveness is mostly due to a failure to implement the directive rather than a need to revise its provisions³. Inaction to implement the WFD costs EUR 51.1 billion annually⁴, while the implementation gap is around EUR 25 billion/year⁵.

In its October 2025 conclusions, Council underlines the urgent need for proper implementation and enforcement of existing EU water legislation⁶.

1. Considering what is at stake, how will the Commission ensure that regulatory simplification does not weaken key principles of the WFD, including cost recovery, ecological-flow standards, the protection of drinking water sources and the polluter-pays principle, and including limiting the exemptions to the ones agreed in the recent revision?
2. Will the Commission guarantee exclusion of the WFD from any omnibus package, including in any future omnibus package?
3. What measures will the Commission take to address the Council's call for strengthened implementation and enforcement of EU water legislation?

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¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2000/60/oj>).

² The EU Water Framework Directive: A modern and powerful tool to provide clean, healthy, flowing waters (July 2025 – Living Rivers Europe coalition).

³ https://commission.europa.eu/news-and-media/news/evaluation-eu-water-legislation-concludes-it-broadly-fit-purpose-implementation-needs-speed-2019-12-12_en.

⁴ The EU Water Framework Directive: A modern and powerful tool to provide clean, healthy, flowing waters (July 2025 – Living Rivers Europe coalition).

⁵ Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) Third river basin management plans Second flood risk management plans (COM(2025)0002).

⁶ Council conclusions on a European Water Resilience Strategy (13390/25).