

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001399/24
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(23 July 2024)**

Subject: Actions to address water scarcity

A combination of high temperatures, severe drought and reduced rainfall ⁽¹⁾ has led to water shortages, with serious consequences for cities, rural areas and islands alike.

According to the EEA ⁽²⁾, around 20% ⁽³⁾ of the European territory and 30% of Europeans experience serious pressure on water resources or scarcity of water resources. Meanwhile, the economic cost is estimated at EUR 9 ⁽⁴⁾ billion annually.

This makes it imperative to adopt a holistic approach that encompasses all water resources, the protection of ecosystems, human consumption, agriculture, industry and tourism.

In view of this:

1. What does the Commission plan to do to ensure the availability and safety of water reserves?
2. Are existing funding tools sufficient to meet water supply investment needs and to finance projects to research and develop new technologies to tackle the problem in question?

Submitted: 23.7.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(12 September 2024)**

Recently, the political guidelines of the President-elect have announced a Water Resilience Initiative that aims, *inter alia*, to support Member States in their efforts to combat the very severe consequences of water scarcity.

Such strategy will build on a robust water *acquis* and will also complement a myriad of ongoing activities to assess the severity of droughts ⁽¹⁾, measure drought impacts ⁽²⁾ and predict future drought risks ⁽³⁾.

As regards funding needs, EU Funds are there to provide financial support to water related investments. Between 2021 and 2027, some EUR 13 billion of Cohesion Policy funds ⁽⁴⁾ will be invested in water management.

In the context of Horizon Europe ⁽⁵⁾ of particular relevance are the partnerships ‘Water Security for the Planet’ ⁽⁶⁾, the Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) ⁽⁷⁾ together with the Missions ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’ ⁽⁸⁾ and ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’ ⁽⁹⁾.

Moreover, financial support is available under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) ⁽¹⁰⁾ in order to support farmers for the application of mandatory requirements stemming from the Water Framework Directive ⁽¹¹⁾ and investments in improving irrigation infrastructure.

In addition, incentives are provided for sustainable agricultural practices, including deploying nature-based solutions against water scarcity.

¹ ¹In some cases, rainfall was less than 50% of the normal rate for the specific time of year. Data by the National Observatory of Athens, taken from an article published by *Kathimerini* newspaper <https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/563108608/leipsydria-oyte-stagona-vrochis-stin-athina-ton-ioynio/>.

² European Environment Agency

³ EEA Report No 12/2021, Water resources across Europe — confronting water stress: an updated assessment

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁽¹⁾ <https://drought.emergency.copernicus.eu/tumbo/edo/map/?id=1000>

⁽²⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-publishes-new-tools-help-predict-and-adapt-sectoral-drought-impacts-2023-10-11_en

⁽³⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/21a1984a-7478-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/cohesion-fund_en

⁽⁵⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁽⁶⁾ <https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/>

⁽⁷⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/prima_en

⁽⁸⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en

⁽⁹⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/adaptation-climate-change_en

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en

⁽¹¹⁾ 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. 1-73, as amended by Commission Directive 2014/101/EU of 30 October 2014, OJ L 311, 31.10.2014, p. 32-35.