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E-001474/2024

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(15.10.2024)

1. Neither the Water Framework Directive¹, the Drinking Water Directive² nor the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive³ establishes whether the management and supply of water should be done by the public administration or by private entities. Moreover, Article 12 of Directive 2014/23⁴ explicitly excludes the water sector from its scope, leaving the organisation and governance of water services a matter of national competence.

2. Greece is a major beneficiary of EU funding including for water infrastructures. Cohesion Policy⁵ supports Greece with more than EUR 1 billion to modernise infrastructures including water transportation and wastewater treatment plants. For instance, in November 2022 Greece received EUR 21.1 million from the Cohesion Policy Funds⁶ for upgrading its water infrastructures. Moreover, the European Regional Development Fund⁷ and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development⁸ also co-fund measures in Greece to improve regional water infrastructures. Importantly, the selection of projects under all these funds remains ultimately the responsibility of each Member State. Within Greece's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)⁹, a water regulatory authority has been established with the aim to strengthen the institutional framework, supervise the water sector and ensure the sustainability of water services, while Greece benefits from RRP funding for water supply and water saving infrastructures. Greece also participates in several research and innovation projects of Horizon Europe¹⁰ for water resilience like 'Water Security for the Planet'¹¹, 'PRIMA'¹² and 'A Soil Deal for Europe'¹³.

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

² Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast), OJ L 435, 23.12.2020, p. 1–62.

³ Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment, OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40–52.

⁴ Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concession contracts, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 1–64.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/cohesion-fund_en

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013, OJ L 435/1, 6.12.2021.

⁹ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en

¹⁰ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

¹¹ <https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/>

¹² <https://prima-med.org/>

¹³ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/soil-deal-europe_en