

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001602/24
to the Commission
Loucas Fourlas (PPE)
(3 September 2024)**

Subject: Diminishing water resources in the EU

The fact that water resources are diminishing due to climate change and that scientists are warning of a worsening crisis, with even drinking water affected, signals cause for concern.

This phenomenon has significant implications for agriculture, the environment and for all Europeans, as well as for their right to access drinking water.

In view of this:

What measures is the Commission taking to address the issue of diminishing water resources and water scarcity?

Submitted: 3.9.2024

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

The political guidelines ⁽¹⁾ of the President of the Commission announced the development of a water resilience strategy to ensure water resources are properly managed, water scarcity addressed and the competitive innovative edge of the water industry enhanced by a circular economy approach.

The aim, *inter alia*, is to better support Member States in strengthening their water security, as water is increasingly under stress from uses and climate change.

It will build on ongoing efforts to tackle water scarcity and droughts and enhance drought management, taking into account the impacts of climate change ⁽²⁾, including through a working group on water scarcity and droughts ⁽³⁾, as well as the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission has been assessing the severity of droughts ⁽⁵⁾, drought impacts ⁽⁶⁾ and future drought risks ⁽⁷⁾ and offered support to Member States to either establish or improve national and regional drought observatories by leveraging the European Drought Observatory of the Copernicus Emergency Management Service.

The EU is also providing significant support to water resilience investments. Between 2021 and 2027, some EUR 13 billion of Cohesion Policy funds ⁽⁸⁾ will be invested in water management. Moreover, the Common Agricultural Policy ⁽⁹⁾ supports more efficient irrigation and measures to render farming more sustainable for ground and surface water.

Horizon Europe ⁽¹⁰⁾ also supports research and innovation on water resilience ⁽¹¹⁾, through partnerships, Missions and the Work Programme.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/president-elect-ursula-von-der-leyen_en

⁽²⁾ In the context of the implementation of the Water Framework 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.

⁽³⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/water-scarcity-and-droughts_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy_en

⁽⁵⁾ <https://drought.emergency.copernicus.eu/tumbo/edo/map/?id=1000>

⁽⁶⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-publishes-new-tools-help-predict-and-adapt-sectoral-drought-impacts-2023-10-11_en

⁽⁷⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/21a1984a-7478-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁽⁸⁾ <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/stories/s/21-27-Sustainable-water-management/ehce-gj6d>

⁽⁹⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en

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

⁽¹¹⁾ Of particular relevance are the partnerships ‘Water Security for the Planet’ (<https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/>), the Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA, <https://prima-med.org/>) together with the Missions ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’ (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), ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’ (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) and ‘A Soil Deal for Europe’ (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#what-are-eu-missions).