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E-001644/2024

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.10.2024)

The Commission will consider how to best support water reuse in the next long-term EU budget post-2027, but financing possibilities already exist under the current Multiannual Financial Framework¹ and NextGenerationEU²; water reuse infrastructure for irrigation is eligible under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development³; funds can also be mobilised under the European Regional Development Fund⁴, the Cohesion Fund⁵, the EU programme for the environment and climate action⁶, Horizon Europe⁷ and the Recovery and Resilience Facility⁸. Public and private investments can also be mobilised via the InvestEU programme⁹.

The Commission is keen to foster the wastewater reuse. It has worked to facilitate the implementation of the Water Reuse Regulation (WRR)¹⁰ with the publication of guidelines on the application of WRR¹¹ and a Delegated Regulation on risk management¹². It organises and participates in workshops and other events to exchange best practices, widely shared in publications^{13,14} and online¹⁵. This responds to commitments included in the 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan¹⁶, the revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive¹⁷ and the revised Industrial Emissions Directive¹⁸. Moreover, the Commission supports Member States through

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/2021-2027_en

² https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en

³ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd_en

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/, under a specific objective on water, which covers investment primarily in water supply, wastewater management and water efficiency.

⁶ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en

⁷ Research and innovation framework programme https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁸ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

⁹ https://investeu.europa.eu/index_en

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 on minimum requirements for water reuse, OJ L 177, 5.6.2020, p. 32–55.

¹¹ Commission Notice - Guidelines to support the application of Regulation 2020/741 on minimum requirements for water reuse 2022/C 298/01, OJ C 298, 5.8.2022, p. 1–55.

¹² Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1765 of 11 March 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to technical specifications of the key elements of risk management, OJ L, 2024/1765, 20.6.2024.

¹³ European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Gawlik B. et al, The gateway to the future of the Mediterranean Water, energy, food and the environment Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/38718>

¹⁴ European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Maffettone, R. and Gawlik, B., Technical guidance water reuse risk management for agricultural irrigation schemes in Europe, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/590804>

¹⁵ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/index_en

¹⁶ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/circular-economy-action-plan_en

¹⁷ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning urban wastewater treatment (recast): <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7108-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁸ Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 amending Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, OJ L, 2024/1785, 15.7.2024.

the Technical Support Instrument¹⁹ providing technical expertise to design and implement reforms, including those pertaining to water management. In addition, in June 2024 the Commission launched the #WaterWiseEU communication campaign²⁰ to raise awareness of the need to wisely manage water resources including through water reuse. Finally, the Commission announced an initiative on Water Resilience, which will also address water use efficiency.

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument, *OJ L 57*, 18.2.2021.

²⁰ https://commission.europa.eu/news/waterwiseeu-campaign-transform-how-we-think-about-water-europe-2024-07-11_en