

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001776/24
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(20 September 2024)**

Subject: Information on the management and financing of the urban wastewater treatment works in Scordia (CT)

The municipality of Scordia's (CT) sewage system is in urgent need of upgrading and expanding so as to comply with EU directives and to prevent any further damage to the local environment. Despite the urgent nature of and clear need for this work, concerns have been raised as to delays in implementing them and the lack of transparency in the financing process ⁽¹⁾.

The project, which includes upgrading the Scordia purification plant and building a wastewater collector stretching from Militello to Scordia is slated to cost a total of EUR 21 million ⁽²⁾. Although a proportion of these funds has been allocated under the Fund for Development and Cohesion (FSC) for 2025-2028, there remain question marks as to where the remaining EUR 15.6 will come from and what the timetable for completing the work will be ⁽³⁾.

This uncertainty has been aggravated by potential penalties for infringing Directive 91/271/EEC, which are liable to incur further costs for developing the area ⁽⁴⁾.

Can the Commission, therefore, answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of the reasons for the delay in the work to upgrade the Scordia purification plant and can it provide clarification on the lack of transparency as to the timeframe and funding needed for completing the project?
2. How much are the fines for non-compliance with Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban wastewater treatment, specifically for the municipality of Scordia, and what measures have been or will be taken to avoid further penalties and aggravating the dispute with the EU?

Submitted: 20.9.2024

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

The Commission is not aware of the reasons of the national delays in the works to upgrade the Scordia purification plant. Only the competent national authorities are responsible for the disbursement of the national funds and the Commission has not identified any EU funds earmarked by the Italian authorities for the project in question.

On the basis of the last call for payment sent by the Commission to the Italian authorities, concerning the 7th semester after the applicable judgment ⁽¹⁾ of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Italy paid a fine of EUR 95 429, specifically for the municipality of Scordia for breaches of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive ⁽²⁾.

In order to avoid further penalties, the competent national authorities must ensure full compliance with the above-mentioned ruling by ensuring the required collection and treatment of wastewater, including, if appropriate, by programming available EU funds to build the necessary infrastructure.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supports the construction and upgrade of urban wastewater treatment infrastructure.

Dedicated resources are allocated in the ERDF regional programme for Sicily for an amount of around EUR 72 million. Under shared management the responsibility for the selection of interventions lies with the Managing Authority of the programme.

¹ Measures planned by the single extraordinary commissioner for water purification as part of the project: <https://commissariounicodepurazione.it/provvedimenti/?numero=&anno=&comune=&cipe=&fr=scordia>.

² 'Upgrading of the Scordia purification plant — Project completion' and 'Construction wastewater collector from Militello to the Scordia purification plant': https://www2.regione.sicilia.it/deliberegiunta/file/giunta/allegati/N.192_22.05.2024.pdf (ID: FSCRI_RI_3406).

³ Information on the management and financing of the programme budget: <https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/dati/progetti/1si9709/> (cod. ID 33396 e ID 33541 — Delibera CIPE n. 60/2012 — CUP: F77B14000260006).

⁴ Details on penalties for the infringement of Directive 91/271/EEC: <https://commissariounicodepurazione.it/depurazione-il-commissario-straordinario-unico-fabio-fatuzzo-fa-il-punto-sugli-impianti-in-sicilia/>.

⁽¹⁾ C-251/17, *Commission v. Italy* (2018) ECLI:EU:C:2018:358.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40-52.