

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002008/24
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(10 October 2024)**

Subject: Water crisis in the province of Enna, compliance with EU legislation on sustainable water management and respect for the right of access to water

The province of Enna is faced with a serious water crisis that raises major concerns over water management and the right of access to water, in terms both of quantity and of the cost to users.

Representatives of institutions ⁽¹⁾ and civic associations and committees have decried ⁽²⁾ the frailty of the water supply system ⁽³⁾, pointing out that while the region has been affected by drought, there have also been significant water losses. Those losses, attributable to inadequate infrastructure and theft, have been put at around 2 million cubic metres for the first nine months of 2024.

Given that this is an urgent matter ⁽⁴⁾ bearing on the health and safety of the public and respect for the fundamental principles of the European Union in the fields of environmental sustainability and social justice, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What specific steps can it take to support the province of Enna in improving water management, in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change?
2. How will it check that the EU resources allocated to water management ⁽⁵⁾ are being used transparently and effectively, especially in areas of critical need, such as the province of Enna ⁽⁶⁾?

Submitted: 10.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(11 February 2025)**

1. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ⁽¹⁾ supports Member States and regions in improving water management systems and infrastructures. Under the Regional Programme Sicily ERDF 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 and the National Programme Infrastructures and Networks ERDF 2014-2020, some EUR 460 million have been allocated to support sustainable water management in Sicily, with priority for infrastructural interventions reducing losses in the water supply network. These investments concern new and upgraded water supply networks, improvements to reservoirs and the reuse of wastewater.

While Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan allocates EUR 4.8 billion to enhance water supply management through targeted projects, the Council Implementing Decision Annex does not allocate resources specifically to the province of Enna. Any allocation to Enna is a decision of national and regional authorities.

2. According to the Common Provisions Regulation ⁽²⁾ (CPR), the selection and funding of operations is the responsibility of the regional or national authorities managing the programmes. Furthermore, the CPR lays down enabling conditions for Member States to access the ERDF with a view to ensuring that the necessary prerequisites are met for the effective and efficient implementation of a selected specific objective.

For the Regional Programme Sicily ERDF 2021-2027, the enabling condition '2.5 Updated planning for required investments in water and wastewater sectors' is not yet fulfilled; therefore, payments of EU contributions to this sector have not started.

¹ <https://enna.gds.it/articoli/cronaca/2024/10/02/crisi-idrica-il-deputato-venezia-sentito-in-procura-a-enna-dopo-le-denunce-c6f501b2-a568-4fca-bb66-e8694d99199a/>

² <https://www.telenicosia.it/crisi-idrica-in-provincia-di-enna-assoconsumatori-a-pensar-male-si-fa-peccato-ma-spesso-ci-si-azzecca/>

³ <http://www.acquaenna.it/index.php/category/avvisi/>

⁴ <https://enna.gds.it/articoli/cronaca/2024/10/03/crisi-idrica-allarme-per-la-diga-ancipa-ce-acqua-solo-fino-al-20-novembre-ae4a68c3-9eac-42a9-a616-68901a0d12a8/>

⁵ The NRRP measures for the sustainable management of water resources come under Mission 2, Component 4. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a0e7539e-8d32-11ee-8aa6-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁶ *Comitato Senz'acqua Enna sull'interruzione di pubblico servizio e sui costi per gli utenti* (Enna 'We're Without Water' Committee on public service interruptions and outages, and the cost to users); See complaint from Codacons re the manager of the procurement service and the public funds allocated to the water emergency.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

The Commission monitors the programmes' implementation and progress towards the fulfilment of the applicable enabling conditions in regular meetings with the managing authorities.
