

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002133/24
to the Commission
Dan-Ștefan Motreanu (PPE)
(17 October 2024)**

Subject: Water security in the EU

According to an October 2024 report by the European Environment Agency ⁽¹⁾, only 37% of the EU's surface water bodies have reached a 'good' or 'high' ecological status, which reflects the overall health of the EU's aquatic ecosystems.

Surface waters face multiple threats, including air pollution from sources such as coal burning and vehicle emissions, as well as pollution from agricultural activity, which releases harmful waste into the soil.

What actions does the Commission plan to take to strengthen efforts aimed at restoring the EU's rivers, lakes, coastal waters and other key bodies of water, to ensure the long-term security and resilience of this essential resource?

Submitted: 17.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(5 January 2025)**

The Commission plans to publish at the beginning of 2025 two Reports. One is the Commission's assessment of Member States' River Basin and Floods Risk Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽¹⁾ and the Floods Directive ⁽²⁾.

The other is an assessment of Member States' programmes of measures under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive ⁽³⁾. These reports include recommendations to help Member States achieve or maintain good status of their waters.

These recommendations will feed into the new European Water Resilience Strategy ⁽⁴⁾, which will strengthen water security by preserving water quality and quantity and addressing the root causes of water challenges, including pollution, scarcity and the impacts of climate change.

The Commission has been working to strengthen rules against water pollution, including nutrients and chemicals, through the recast of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive ⁽⁵⁾, and its proposal to update the lists of priority substances and groundwater pollutants under the WFD and its 'daughter' directives ⁽⁶⁾.

Moreover, the Common Agricultural Policy ⁽⁷⁾, through Eco-Schemes and Agri-Environment-Climate Commitments ⁽⁸⁾, supports interventions improving water quality on 21% of the EU's agricultural area ⁽⁹⁾.

Efforts to restore EU's rivers, lakes and coastal waters to enhance their resilience are required under the new Nature Restoration Law ⁽¹⁰⁾ and are supported through the EU Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters' ⁽¹¹⁾ and Horizon Europe ⁽¹²⁾.

¹ ¹European Environment Agency, *Europe's state of water 2024: the need for improved water resilience*, 15 October 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/europes-state-of-water-2024>.

⁽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.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27-34.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, OJ L 164 25.6.2008, p. 19.

⁽⁴⁾ As stated in the Political Guidelines of the President of the Commission: https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/towards-new-commission-2024-2029_en

⁽⁵⁾ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning urban wastewater treatment (recast), COM/2022/541 final.

⁽⁶⁾ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration and Directive 2008/105/EC on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy, COM/2022/540 final.

⁽⁷⁾ 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, 6.12.2021, p. 1-186.

⁽⁸⁾ Eco-Schemes and Agri-Environment-Climate Commitments concern interventions beyond mandatory requirements.

⁽⁹⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a435881e-d02b-4b98-b718-104b5a30d1cf_en?filename=csp-at-a-glance-eu-countries_en.pdf

⁽¹⁰⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869, OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024.

⁽¹¹⁾ 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

⁽¹²⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

The Commission will continue supporting the implementation of existing EU water legislation, engaging with Member States to accelerate implementation. It will also continue investigating potential breaches of EU law and take the necessary steps to ensure compliance.
