

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002228/24  
to the Commission  
César Luena (S&D)  
(22 October 2024)**

*Subject:* Consumption of water resources by data centres

Article 12 EED <sup>(1)</sup> establishes an obligation for Member States to require data centres to publish information on their energy performance and sustainability, including water consumption (Annex VII), and mandates the Commission to set up a Union-wide database containing such information.

The database is ready and the energy parameters are defined, but there is no detailed section on water consumption. A recent study <sup>(2)</sup> (2023) estimated that data centres used for AI could account for up to 6 600 million cubic metres in water consumption in 2027.

1. What measures is the Commission considering to address the consumption of water resources by data centres, including possible measures under the EU Water Resilience Strategy?
2. Are companies obliged to report on the water consumption of data centres?
3. How can the Commission oblige data centre owners and operators to reduce their water consumption?

Submitted: 22.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission  
(17 December 2024)**

1. A more efficient use of water is embedded as an objective in a number of laws. The Water Resilience Strategy will be an opportunity to foster water efficiency across sectors, including the Information and Communications Technologies sector.

2. The recast Energy Efficiency Directive <sup>(1)</sup> helps saving water by promoting sustainability in large data centres, driving improvements in energy efficiency and waste heat recovery thus reducing the cooling needs. The directive stipulated the creation of a European reporting scheme for data centres <sup>(2)</sup>, which includes reporting on annual water consumption and the presentation of the water usage effectiveness (WUE) of data centres across Europe. In accordance with the directive, the Commission is working to prepare a proposal for a rating scheme and minimum performance standards for data centres that will consider the water footprint of data centres.

3. The water consumption of data centres and other economic activities should not lead to a deterioration of water bodies in line with Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) <sup>(3)</sup>. Such an obligation must be duly taken into account when choosing the location of those activities and when ascertaining the possible impact they may have on water bodies and aquatic ecosystems. The WFD further also obliges Member States to ensure controls over the abstraction of fresh surface water and groundwater, and regularly review and update controls, where so required to avoid deterioration of the status of water bodies or preventing these from achieving good water status. These controls incentivise more efficient consumption.

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<sup>1</sup> Recast Energy Efficiency Directive (EED)

<sup>2</sup> <https://arxiv.org/abs/2304.03271>

<sup>(1)</sup> Directive (EU) 2023/1791 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast), OJ L 231, 20.9.2023, p. 1-111.

<sup>(2)</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1364 of 14 March 2024 on the first phase of the establishment of a common Union rating scheme for data centres, OJ L, 2024/1364, 17.5.2024.

<sup>(3)</sup> 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.