

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002431/24
to the Commission
Jaume Asens Llodrà (Verts/ALE)
(6 November 2024)**

Subject: Breach of the right to drinking water and sanitation in El Palmar (Vejer de la Frontera)

For several years the association of residents of El Palmar (Vejer de la Frontera, Cádiz) has been highlighting their unsustainable plight, a result of government neglect, the lack of urban planning and unsustainable tourist pressure, which leads to a twenty-fold population increase in the summer.

Most of the nearly 1 300 registered permanent residents lack access to drinking water and sanitation, a clear breach of principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and several directives on waste management.

The failure of the Junta de Andalucía's special plans on land-use planning and basic services to provide funding for the district is hampering the municipal authorities', deprived of the necessary technical, human, administrative and economic, resources, efforts to implement them.

1. Will the Commission investigate this breach of the basic rights of the residents of El Palmar?
2. Has any EU funding previously been allocated to finance projects to provide them with access to drinking water and sanitation?
3. Is it aware of any Next Generation EU funded-projects to resolve similar situations?

Submitted: 6.11.2024

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

The Drinking Water Directive ⁽¹⁾ provides that water intended for human consumption must be wholesome and clean and requires that Member States 'improve or maintain' access of people to water intended for human consumption. The competent authorities in the Member States are responsible for the correct implementation of EU law.

In line with the Commission's strategic approach on enforcement action ⁽²⁾, the most effective way to address individual cases of possible non-compliance, such as the situation described by the Honourable Member, would be the use of the means of redress available at national level.

On the other hand, given the systemic nature of the infringements of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive ⁽³⁾, the Commission pursues an infringement procedure ⁽⁴⁾ against Spain that covers several agglomerations including Vejer de la Frontera ⁽⁵⁾.

The Commission has not identified any funding from the European Regional Development Fund ⁽⁶⁾ to projects in the area of drinking water or sanitation in El Palmar in 2014-2020.

Component 5 of the Spanish Recovery and Resilience Plan ⁽⁷⁾, funded under Next Generation EU ⁽⁸⁾, focuses *inter alia* on improving the management of water resources. Investment 1 aims at implementing actions on water treatment, sanitation, efficiency, savings, re-use and infrastructure.

More specifically, this measure finances the entry into service of water and wastewater treatment infrastructures providing services to at least 425 000 population equivalents in Spain.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast), OJ L 435, 23.12.2020, p. 1-62.

⁽²⁾ As set out in the communication of 19 January 2017 (EU law: Better results through better application — C/2016/8600, OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, p. 10-20) and in the communication of 13 October 2022 COM (2022) 518 final — Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers.

⁽³⁾ Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment — OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40-52.

⁽⁴⁾ Reference INFR(2017)2100.

⁽⁵⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_19_6304

⁽⁶⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-regional-development-fund-erdf_en

⁽⁷⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/spains-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en

⁽⁸⁾ https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en