

EN

E-002967/2024

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.2.2025)

The Commission is aware of the challenges facing the outermost regions in terms of water shortages and is fully committed to supporting these regions in improving water management and related infrastructure. The Commission reiterated this commitment in its communication on the outermost regions¹ of May 2022, which aims to contribute to improving the quality of life of citizens in these regions, in particular as regards basic needs such as water and sanitation. An independent study² on living conditions and access to basic needs in the outermost regions published by the Commission in 2024 further sheds light into the remaining challenges related to access to drinking water and sanitation in some of these regions.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) provides substantial financial support to the French outermost regions on structural investments in drinking water and sanitation, for example to ensure the resilience of water catchments, develop drinking water treatment facilities and equipment, and improve the efficiency of distribution networks. Support to drinking water is also a priority for cohesion policy in these regions in 2021-2027. For instance, in Réunion, Guadeloupe, Saint Martin, and Mayotte, the ERDF will invest respectively EUR 106 million, EUR 148 million, EUR 10 million and EUR 47.5 million to improve the quality of drinking water and sanitation infrastructure.

In addition, the Directive on the quality of water intended for human consumption³ includes provisions to protect human health by ensuring that drinking water is clean and to improve access to drinking water, in particular for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Member States had to transpose this Directive into national law by 12 January 2023, which France did.

¹ COM(2022) 198 final.

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/studies/2024/study-on-living-conditions-and-access-to-selected-basic-needs-in-the-eu-outermost-regions_en

³ 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, OJ L 435, 23.12.2020, p. 1–62.