

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003077/24
to the Commission**

**Danilo Della Valle (The Left), Carolina Morace (The Left), Pasquale Tridico (The Left), Mario Furore (The Left),
Gaetano Pedulla' (The Left), Valentina Palmisano (The Left)**
(20 December 2024)

Subject: Leaks, emergency management and lack of planning in Basilicata (Italy)

Basilicata is experiencing a water crisis affecting over 140 000 citizens and jeopardising public health and the local economy. With the opening of the Camastra floodgates, water from the Basento River, historically contaminated with substances such as PFOS, has entered the water supply. Although this river's resources have been declared drinkable in an emergency, EU regulations require systematic and prolonged monitoring to ensure its quality.

Basilicata also has the highest water leakage rate in Italy (62.1%, source: ISTAT), proof of the serious deficiencies in its infrastructure. The region does not have a water protection plan, a measure which is compulsory under Legislative Decree No152/2006 and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).

Can the Commission therefore say:

1. Whether it is aware of the state of affairs in Basilicata, including the failure to approve the water protection plan, a compulsory condition of Directive 2000/60/EC?
2. Is drawing water from a river basin without a water protection plan — which was never approved owing to the lack of sampling and monitoring — as required by Directive 2000/60/EC permissible under EU legislation? What consequences might this course of action have for the quality and safety of water intended for human consumption?
3. What technical and financial instruments are available to facilitate urgent infrastructure measures, such as reducing water losses and improving the supply network?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(26 February 2025)

The 3rd River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the Southern Apennines mentions that Basilicata is revising its 2008 Water Protection Plan ⁽¹⁾.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽²⁾ requires the production and regular update of a RBMP containing the information in Annex VII for each river basin district. The WFD allows the production of more detailed programmes and management plans supporting RBMPs.

The WFD requires that water bodies used for the abstraction of drinking water are identified, subject to monitoring according to Annex V and meet the objectives set in Article 4.

These water bodies must also meet the quality requirements set in the Drinking Water Directive (DWD) ⁽³⁾. Non-compliant Member States must take appropriate measures to protect human health and to inform concerned consumers.

The DWD requires Member States to assess their water leakage levels and potential for improvement by January 2026. On this basis, the Commission will set by January 2028 a maximum allowable leakage threshold value and Member States exceeding it will have to present within two years an action plan to reduce leakage levels across their territory.

Cohesion funds ⁽⁴⁾ support Member States and regions in improving sustainable water management systems and infrastructures.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Dario Tamburrano (The Left)

⁽¹⁾ https://www.distrettoappenninomeridionale.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Relazione_PdG_Acque_III_Ciclo_rev_11_PC_compressed.pdf, p. 15.

⁽²⁾ 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.

⁽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.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/cohesion-fund_en

Under the Regional Programme Basilicata European Regional Development Fund ⁽⁵⁾ 2021-2027, EUR 16 million of EU funds are allocated to support investments in wastewater treatment systems, while interventions on water supply ⁽⁶⁾ are to be covered with national funds ⁽⁷⁾ and the National Recovery and Resilience Plans ⁽⁸⁾.

Managing authorities and beneficiaries implementing water-related projects can apply for technical assistance under the Cohesion For Transitions (C4T) Community of Practice ⁽⁹⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/

⁽⁶⁾ Including leakage reduction.

⁽⁷⁾ 'Fondo Sviluppo e Coesione'.

⁽⁸⁾ 'Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza'.

⁽⁹⁾ A new call for support will be opened in 2025.