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E-000559/2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.3.2025)

1. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)¹ supports Member States and regions in improving water management systems and infrastructures. Under the Regional Programme Apulia ERDF-ESF+ (European Social Fund+) 2014-2020 and 2021-2027, around EUR 530 million have been allocated to sustainable water management in the region, focusing on reducing water loss, upgrading networks, improving reservoirs and the treatment of wastewater.
2. In line with the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC², responsibility for decisions regarding water management rests with Member States, which ensure that the objectives of the Directive are met. Additional water supply options could be considered by the Italian government and the regional authorities as part of an integrated strategy, to better balance water demand and supply, considering long-term climate scenarios. As outlined by the Commission's 2007 Communication³, policy making should be based on a water hierarchy, implementing where possible water-saving and efficiency measures, including effective water pricing policy and cost-effective alternatives. Adverse effects linked to additional water supply infrastructure must be considered in the environmental assessment.
3. While Italy's recovery and resilience plan (RRP)⁴ allocates EUR 4.8 billion to enhance water supply management, the Council Implementing Decision (CID) Annex⁵ does not allocate resources specifically to Apulia. Any allocation is therefore a decision of national and regional authorities only. Apulia's projects relevant to RRP reporting align with CID Annex milestones and targets. Their implementation status is evaluated during assessment of milestones and targets, coinciding with current and future payment requests.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

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 COM(2007) 414 final.

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/italys-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en

⁵ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15114-2024-ADD-1-REV-1/en/pdf>