

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000775/25
to the Commission**

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(20 February 2025)

Subject: The modernisation of the High-Mountain Meteorological Observatory on Mount Śnieżka

The modernisation of the High-Mountain Meteorological Observatory on Mount Śnieżka (in the Sudeten Mountains on the Czech-Polish border) is a transnational project of significant environmental and territorial importance for Poland, Czechia and Germany. The project, led by the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management — National Research Institute in Poland, aims to improve infrastructure, address wastewater management challenges and preserve the unique architectural and natural heritage of this cross-border region. However, outdated wastewater treatment systems in mountain shelters, including those on both sides of the border, are causing local streams to be polluted.

Despite meeting all the formal requirements, the city of Karpacz faces financial barriers to securing approximately EUR 18 million to modernise its wastewater treatment plant, a prerequisite for sustainable water management in line with EU Directive 91/271/EEC ⁽¹⁾. Current funding opportunities under the FENX.01.03 scheme exclude projects like this due to strict compliance criteria for new agglomerations.

Given the modernisation project's alignment with EU environmental objectives and its cross-border significance:

1. Can the Commission allocate European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) resources directly to such transnational projects bypassed by national schemes?
2. How will the Commission ensure adequate funding for cross-border initiatives of EU-wide importance under existing frameworks?
3. Will upcoming calls under the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) or similar programmes prioritise projects such as these, to foster territorial cohesion and environmental sustainability?

Submitted: 20.2.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(27 March 2025)

The allocation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) resources depends on the national selection schemes.

Both, the geographical scope of the cross-border ⁽¹⁾ programmes and the global amounts ⁽²⁾ of the total support from the ERDF have been adopted by Commission Implementing Decisions following proposals by Member States. The Commission does not have the possibility to change the allocations on its own.

The ERDF is implemented under shared management. This implies that the selection of projects to be financed falls under the responsibility of the Managing Authorities of the ERDF programmes.

For Interreg, this would be the Monitoring Committee of the cooperation programmes, composed of representatives from each of the participating Member States, in this case Czechia and Poland ⁽³⁾.

At the same time, in Poland, the mainstream 2021-2027 cohesion programme FENiKS ⁽⁴⁾ funds wastewater treatment investments in agglomerations of at least 15 000 population equivalent ('p.e.') not compliant with the directive 91/271/EEC ⁽⁵⁾, with exceptions for areas affected by the September 2024 floods, where agglomerations from 2 000 p.e. may be eligible.

¹ ¹Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment, OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1991/271/oj>.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/1638 of 14 August 2023 amending Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/75 setting out the list of Interreg programme areas to receive support from the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments of the Union, broken down by strand and Interreg programme under the European territorial cooperation goal (notified under document C(2023) 5460).

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/1635 of 14 August 2023 amending Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/74 setting out the list of Interreg programmes and indicating the global amount of the total support from the European Regional Development Fund and from each external financing instrument of the Union for each programme and the list of the amounts transferred between strands under the European territorial cooperation goal for the period 2021 to 2027 (notified under document C(2023) 5459).

⁽³⁾ <https://www.cz-pl.eu/>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.feniks.gov.pl/>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1991/271/oj/eng>.

Moreover, European Funds 2021-2027 for Dolnośląskie ⁽⁶⁾ explicitly supports wastewater projects in agglomerations from 2 000 to 15 000 p.e., particularly where compliance with the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive is lacking.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://rpo.dolnyslask.pl/o-projekcie/feds-2021-2027/>