

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001266/25
to the Commission
Veronika Vrecionová (ECR)
(26 March 2025)

Subject: Financing of innovative solutions in the water sector

Water is one of the most precious and undervalued natural resources, and it is much appreciated that the Commission has firmly placed it on the upcoming agenda ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾.

One prominent issue in the European water sector is ageing infrastructure, which can cause problems such as frequent leaks and inefficiencies, leading to escalating costs and threatening water security. Municipalities often play a key role in managing water infrastructure. However, they frequently rely on limited budgets that are insufficient to cover the high costs of maintenance, upgrades and technological advancements. Even though modernisation and innovation of infrastructure bring long-term environmental and social benefits, these projects are capital-intensive, requiring significant upfront investments.

1. What measures aimed at boosting innovation and innovative financing solutions does the Commission plan to introduce in its future initiatives?
2. Does the Commission consider boosting innovation and exploring innovative financing solutions as one of the overall future objectives for the water sector?
3. Is the Commission monitoring innovative financing solutions in the water sector, such as bond programmes, that have already been successfully applied in some Member States?

Submitted: 26.3.2025

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

As announced in the President's political Political Guidelines 2024-2029 ⁽¹⁾ the Commission has adopted a Water Resilience Strategy ⁽²⁾ *'to ensure sources are properly managed, scarcity is addressed, and that we enhance the competitive innovative edge of our water industry and take a circular economy approach'*. In this context, the strategy addressed the need to boost innovation and consider innovative financing solutions, including private investment.

In recent years, key pieces of EU water sector legislation ⁽³⁾ have entered into force regarding drinking water ⁽⁴⁾, urban wastewater ⁽⁵⁾ and water reuse ⁽⁶⁾.

These set ambitious requirements that necessitate innovative solutions, including treatment technologies, leakage management, energy management and circular water use. Innovations in these areas can further strengthen the competitive advantage of the EU water sector.

The Water Resilience Strategy includes a number of proposals to mobilise the necessary public and private financing. The Cohesion policy funds ⁽⁷⁾ recent mid-term review ⁽⁸⁾ proposed by the Commission provides exceptional incentives for investing in water including up to 100% EU financing for this purpose.

¹ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/call-evidence-begins-eu-water-resilience-strategy-2025-02-04_en.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_269.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/environment/water-resilience-strategy_en.

⁽³⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/drinking-water_en.

⁽⁵⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/urban-wastewater_en.

⁽⁶⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/water-reuse_en.

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/cohesion-fund_en.

⁽⁸⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/communications/2025/a-modernised-cohesion-policy-the-mid-term-review_en.