

EN

E-001335/2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.6.2025)

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD)¹ requires the removal of micropollutants from urban wastewaters with quaternary treatment. The Polluter-Pays Principle² is enshrined in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The European Court of Auditors³ recommended strengthening the integration of this principle into environmental legislation. The UWWTD refers to it⁴ and provides for an extended producer responsibility system (EPR) whereby the pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors, which represent the main source of micropollutants in urban wastewater⁵, finance at least 80 % of the quaternary treatment costs.

The impact assessment accompanying the Commission's proposal assessed the cost of such extended producer responsibility system and its impact⁶ on the pharmaceutical sector at EU level. In addition, as announced in the Water Resilience Strategy⁷ of 4 June 2025, in the context of the implementation of the extended producer responsibility, the Commission will conduct an updated study of costs and its potential impacts on concerned sectors. In addition, the Commission will continue to support Member States in the pragmatic design of national systems with a view to avoiding unexpected or unintended consequences, in particular for the availability and affordability of medicines.

¹ Directive (EU) 2024/3019 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 concerning urban wastewater treatment (recast), OJ L, 2024/3019, 12.12.2024.

² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/economy-and-finance/ensuring-polluters-pay_en.

³ https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications/SR21_12.

⁴ Article 1 of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.

⁵ Impact assessment accompanying the proposal for a Directive concerning urban wastewater treatment (recast): https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-revised-urban-wastewater-treatment-directive_en.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/environment/water-resilience-strategy_en.