

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001846/25
to the Commission
Catarina Martins (The Left)
(7 May 2025)**

Subject: Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS): a critical environmental challenge

PFAS represent a significant environmental challenge. Current studies consistently demonstrate that these persistent and mobile pollutants contaminate various environmental compartments. Numerous contamination cases have been reported near Brussels in Belgium, severely affecting water supply due to groundwater contamination.

The contamination of groundwater, surface water and oceans already incurs substantial public health costs due to the toxicity of these substances. Soils are the primary recipients of PFAS contamination, yet research efforts under the Horizon Europe programme, namely the mission soil initiative, are notably lacking.

1. How is the Commission planning to address this problem, and which concrete steps will it take to develop the methodological and analytical capabilities of the EU research centres?
2. Does the Commission intend to make an inventory of current soil contamination across Europe, which is essential for taking necessary action?
3. Given the high level of toxicity of these chemicals, does the Commission envisage any research in soil pollution modelling to predict future contamination levels and transfer pathways, considering their risk to humans, plants and animals, as well as to surface water, groundwater and oceans?

Submitted: 7.5.2025

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(2 July 2025)**

The REACH Regulation has restricted the placing on the market and use of some per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS); a dossier for additional restrictions on the whole PFAS family is ongoing ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾.

The proposal for a Soil Monitoring Law ⁽⁴⁾ introduces a monitoring framework for EU soils and a register of potentially contaminated and contaminated sites. The proposed revision of the water policy introduces maximum concentrations for several PFAS ⁽⁵⁾.

The EU Soil Observatory ⁽⁶⁾ works with EU laboratories and standardisation committees on a baseline for future PFAS monitoring in the EU and provides technical guidance to the Member States.

The European Environment Agency maintains a database of examples of PFAS hotspots ⁽⁷⁾, tracking the presence and sources of PFAS in the environment, and their potential impacts on human health.

The Commission actively supports research on PFAS in soils. Under the EU Mission ‘A Soil Deal for Europe’ ⁽⁸⁾, two projects work on the identification of contaminants of emerging concern including PFAS ⁽⁹⁾. SOILPROM ⁽¹⁰⁾ and PHISHES ⁽¹¹⁾ model pollutant transport (including PFAS) across the soil-water-atmosphere interfaces. E-SPFdigit ⁽¹²⁾ focuses on novel on-site (soil, plant and food) digital services on chemical and biological contaminants including PFAS.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC (Text with EEA relevance) Text with EEA relevance.

⁽²⁾ Currently, a broad PFAS REACH restriction is under assessment. This was reflected in a recent question from the European Parliament (EPQ-E-001152/2025).

⁽³⁾ Some PFAS have a harmonised classification and labelling under the CLP Regulation. REGULATION (EU) 2024/2865 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 October 2024 amending Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (Text with EEA relevance).

⁽⁴⁾ Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on Soil Monitoring and Resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) COM/2023/416 final.

⁽⁵⁾ Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration and Directive 2008/105/EC on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy (Text with EEA relevance) {SEC(2022) 540 final} — {SWD(2022) 540 final} — {SWD(2022) 543 final}.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/euso>.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/european-zero-pollution-dashboards/indicators/pfas-contamination-and-soil-remediation-signal>.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://mission-soil-platform.ec.europa.eu/>.

⁽⁹⁾ <https://islandr-project.eu/>, <https://aragorn-horizon.eu/>.

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://soilprom.eu/>.

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://www.phishes-project.eu/>.

⁽¹²⁾ <https://e-spfdigit.eu/>.

Relevant Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020 projects focus on strategies for prevention and removal of persistent chemicals including PFAS ⁽¹³⁾, monitoring of emerging pollutants ⁽¹⁴⁾, detection, monitoring and remediation ⁽¹⁵⁾, and PFAS in the soil-sediment-water system ⁽¹⁶⁾. More projects will also be funded on this issue ⁽¹⁷⁾. Other EU programmes ⁽¹⁸⁾ also fund research on this topic. The Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals ⁽¹⁹⁾ develops next-generation chemical risk assessments.

⁽¹³⁾ <https://zeropm.eu/>.

⁽¹⁴⁾ <https://www.biosensei.eu/>.

⁽¹⁵⁾ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101037509>.

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://promiscues.eu/>.

⁽¹⁷⁾ More specifically, Horizon Europe Cluster 6 Work Programme 2025 includes a call (HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-07) that aims, among other things, to monitor emerging pollutants (which could include PFAS) coming from the food and drink industries.

⁽¹⁸⁾ such as Life Programme and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://www.eu-parc.eu/>.