

EN

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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(13.8.2025)

The Commission conducted a timely impact assessment¹ to accompany its 2022 proposal for an Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (recast)².

Following in-depth discussions, a revised Directive was adopted with a large majority in both the European Parliament and the Council. It was published on 12 December 2024 and entered into force on 1 January 2025. The Directive requires notably the removal of micropollutants from urban wastewater in order to protect the environment and human health. In this context, an extended producer responsibility (EPR) system was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, whereby the pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors - the main source of micropollutants in urban wastewater - will finance at least 80 % of the quaternary treatment needed to remove micropollutants. This approach implements the Polluter-Pays Principle³ enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the recommendations by the European Court of Auditors.

The Commission is fostering exchanges⁴ of information and best practices to achieve a well-functioning and proportionate EPR system in all Member States.

As announced in the European Water Resilience Strategy⁵ adopted on 4 June 2025, the Commission will, in the context of the implementation of the EPR, conduct an updated study of its costs and its potential impacts on concerned sectors. This update will focus on the cost of quaternary treatment and does not constitute a new impact assessment.

A full evaluation⁶ of the Directive is planned by 2033.

¹ Impact assessment accompanying the proposal for a Directive concerning urban wastewater treatment (recast), 2022: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-revised-urban-wastewater-treatment-directive_en.

² 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.

³ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/economy-and-finance/ensuring-polluters-pay_en.

⁴ Article 10(6) of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.

⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/european-water-resilience-strategy_en.

⁶ Article 30 of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.