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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.8.2025)

The Water Framework Directive¹ (WFD) requires Member States adopting and implementing a programme of measures in each River Basin District (RBD), including measures to reduce or phase out emissions to meet the standards set in the Environmental Quality Standards Directive² (EQSD). As required by Article 5 to EQSD, all emissions, discharges and losses of priority substances, including heavy metals listed in Annex I to EQSD, should be listed in an inventory for each RBD including their concentrations in sediment and biota, as appropriate. Heavy metals are in the indicative list of the main pollutants in Annex VIII to WFD, which Member States have to consider including in their monitoring programs.

The Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)³ regulates the environmental impacts of large industrial installations. Its scope now also covers the mining of metals. The process to develop minimum environmental EU-level requirements (Best Available Techniques (BAT) Conclusions⁴) for these mining activities, which will address emissions to water, has started in 2024 and shall not exceed four years. Within four years of publication of the BAT Conclusions, Member States need to update the permits to comply with the IED, and installations need to comply with the permit conditions.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, it is the primary responsibility of the relevant national authorities to ensure the correct implementation and enforcement of the applicable EU legislation.

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1–73.

² Directive 2008/105/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directives 82/176/EEC, 83/513/EEC, 84/156/EEC, 84/491/EEC, 86/280/EEC and amending Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 84–97.

³ Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 amending Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, OJ L, 2024/1785, 15.7.2024.

⁴ Commission Implementing Decisions establishing the best available techniques (BAT) conclusions, under Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions.