

EN

E-002856/2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.8.2025)

The Commission currently lacks sufficient information to determine whether the recent observations of white foam and odour formation on River UI constitute a breach of obligations under the Water Framework Directive (WFD)¹ or Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD)².

Portugal submitted its third River Basin Management Plans with significant delay in March 2024³. The Commission assessment of the Portuguese plans is hence still ongoing. According to the third River Basin Management Plan, the River UI and River Antuã are reported as a single surface water body. The ecological status is moderate, and the chemical status fails to achieve good status, indicating non-compliance with the WFD's goals for good surface water status⁴. The Commission will initiate structural dialogues with Member States to enhance implementation and tackle root causes.

According to the 2020 data reported by Portugal under the UWWTD, the Salgueiro urban wastewater treatment plant serving Oliveira de Azeméis and S. Joao de Madeira is compliant with the requirements of the Directive. The compliance assessment of 2022 data is currently ongoing and the results should be available in autumn 2025.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible to ensure compliance with EU law, including verifying individual cases of potential breach of the relevant rules. In line with its strategic approach on enforcement action the Commission focuses on systemic non-compliance⁵.

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, as amended by Commission Directive 2014/101/EU of 30 October 2014, OJ L 311, 31.10.2014, p. 32–35.

² Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment, OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40–52.

³ The deadline for submitting the third RBMPs was March 2022.

⁴ Surface water body status can be viewed here: <https://discomap.eea.europa.eu/wise-freshwaterviewer/>.

⁵ Communication from the Commission - EU law: Better results through better application, OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, p. 10–20, and Communication from the Commission - Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers, 13.10.2022, COM(2022) 518 final.