

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003552/25
to the Commission**

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(16 September 2025)

Subject: Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and the effective implementation of the Polluter Pays principle

The recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive ⁽¹⁾, which entered into force on 1 January 2025, represents a major milestone in the EU's efforts to safeguard water quality, ocean ecosystems and public health. It introduces an extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme under which producers of medicinal and cosmetic products are required to cover at least 80% of this new treatment's costs.

This treatment is essential to achieving the directive's environmental objectives introducing a 'Polluter Pays' principle, aiming to promote accountability and fairness across the value chain. However, the new EPR scheme has recently come under increased scrutiny, including a call in the new water resilience strategy for a new assessment of its potential impacts.

Without effective implementation of the directive and the EPR scheme, water-dependent sectors, fisheries and aquaculture production will continue to be burdened by increased costs and production losses due to the pollution caused by others. Moreover, this pollution seriously affects the ocean and marine ecosystems.

In the light of this, can the Commission explain:

1. the added value of the new assessment of the directive's implementation compared to the one prepared ahead of the Commission's proposal?
2. how it will monitor the Member States' implementation of their obligations under the new Directive obligations?
3. how it will ensure that the EPR scheme is implemented fairly and effectively, despite effective lobbying pressure exerted by some important industrial sectors?

Submitted: 16.9.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(11 November 2025)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Members that the recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive ⁽¹⁾ (UWWTD) represents a major milestone in the EU's efforts to safeguard water quality, ocean ecosystems, and public health. The Commission is committed to the directive's effective implementation.

As announced in the Water Resilience Strategy ⁽²⁾, adopted on 4 June 2025, in the context of the implementation of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) system under the UWWTD, the Commission will conduct an updated study of costs and its potential impacts on concerned sectors.

The update will focus on the cost of quaternary treatment based on the most recent and relevant data and changes in the adopted legislation compared to the Commission's initial proposal.

The update will also take into account inflation since the original impact assessment was done in 2022. This will provide a valuable update of the data underpinning the EPR system.

Member States are responsible for the implementation of EPR provisions ⁽³⁾. They will submit national implementation programmes ⁽⁴⁾ to the Commission, which are to include, when available, an estimation of the financial contribution from the producer responsibility organisations.

To support Member States in developing appropriate EPR schemes, the Commission is holding extensive consultations and exchanges of information, experiences, and best practices between Member States and industry stakeholders. Notably, these exchanges ⁽⁵⁾ cover measures to ensure the effective implementation of the directive.

¹ Directive (EU) 2024/3019 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 concerning urban wastewater treatment (OJ L, 2024/3019, 12.12.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/3019/oj>).

⁽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/publications/european-water-resilience-strategy_en.

⁽³⁾ Articles 9 and 10 of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.

⁽⁴⁾ Article 23 of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.

⁽⁵⁾ Article 10.6. of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.

Finally, the Commission will have access to Member States' data sets ⁽⁶⁾ on the implementation of other provisions of the directive, on the basis of which compliance assessments will be conducted.

⁽⁶⁾ Article 22 of Directive (EU) 2024/3019.