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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(4.11.2025)

The Commission published its assessment on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in February 2025[1]. Despite progress in some areas, the report acknowledges slow overall progress towards meeting the objectives of the WFD and calls on Member States to accelerate action, including as regards tackling hydromorphological pressure and improve river continuity.

The country-specific assessment for Germany[2] lists hydropower as a pressure with impacts on the ecological status, including migratory fish and recommends Germany, among others, to step up efforts to improve river continuity and increase fish protection.

The Commission will launch structured dialogues with Member States to follow-up on its recommendation and accelerate and scale up implementation of the EU water acquis and to establish implementation priorities of the WFD. The start of the dialogue with Germany is envisaged before the end of 2025.

Germany is also obliged to ensure river continuity for fish species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive[3] in designated protected areas by establishing the necessary conservation measures pursuant to Article 6(1) of the Directive. Deficits in complying with the Directive are addressed in the Environmental Implementation Report or in dedicated meetings with the national authorities. The Commission also initiated infringement procedures to address general implementation problems. For instance, in case C-116/22[4] Germany was found in breach of its obligations to establish conservation measures pursuant to Article 6(1) for all Natura 2000 sites.

The Commission is not planning to revise the existing guidelines on the requirements for hydropower in relation to EU nature legislation[5].

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[1] Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) (Third River Basin Management Plans and Second Flood Risk Management Plans), https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/water-framework-directive/implementation-reports_en.

[2] Third River Basin Management Plans Second Flood Hazard and Risk Maps and Second Flood Risk Management Plans Member State: Germany Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) Third River Basin Management Plans Second Flood Risk Management Plans https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025SC0025.

[3] Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206 22.7.1992, p. 7.

[4] https://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?nat=or&mat=or&pcs=Oor&jur=C%2CT%2CF&num=C-116%252F22&for=&jge=&dates=&language=en&pro=&cit=none%252CC%252CCJ%252CR%252C2008E%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252Ctrue%252Cfalse%252Cfalse&oqp=&td=%3BALL&avg=&lgrec=en&page=1&lg=&cid=5937125.

[5] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b0279310-a5b4-11e8-99ee-01aa75ed71a1/.