

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004141/25
to the Commission
Jonas Sjöstedt (The Left), Hanna Gedin (The Left)
(21 October 2025)**

Subject: Mining in alum shale deposits is a threat to drinking water

Prospecting and planning are under way in a number of places in Sweden with a view to the establishment of uranium mines in alum shale deposits. In Jämtland, Västerbotten, Skåne and Västergötland active exploration permits are in place, authorising foreign companies to look into mining opportunities. The areas concerned are right next to large reservoirs of drinking water, and this is particularly problematic because even minor accidents can result in long-term contamination of drinking water for tens of thousands of people. An accident at a uranium mine in Finland, for example, contaminated a large area and caused major environmental damage.

At a time when the EU is looking to reduce its dependence on imports of strategic raw materials, it is absolutely vital that this does not come at the expense of the environment or of human health, and that there is full compliance with and enforcement of EU legislation.

Question to the Commission:

What penalties are applied when Member States fail to comply with EU legislation?

Submitted: 21.10.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(19 January 2026)**

The Commission supports the Member States' implementation efforts through, for example, dialogue and guidance; providing EU financing through e.g. the Cohesion Policy ⁽¹⁾, the Common Agricultural Policy ⁽²⁾, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility ⁽³⁾; and providing technical assistance (knowledge, best practices, training) ⁽⁴⁾. The Commission has been clear that focusing on strengthening resilience does not come at the expense of the environment.

Where necessary, the Commission takes enforcement action through infringement cases. The national courts of Member States play an important role in applying EU environmental law at national level.

If a Member State breaches its EU law obligations, the Commission may open an infringement case under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). If the Member State does not take the necessary measures following a letter of formal notice and a reasoned opinion, the Commission may refer the case to the Court of Justice of the EU.

Where the Court finds that a Member State has failed to fulfil its obligations and the Member State concerned subsequently still does not comply with the judgment, the Commission may bring the case back before the Court pursuant to Article 260 TFEU and request financial sanctions (lump sum and/or periodic penalty payment). The level of such penalties is determined by the Court ⁽⁵⁾.

According to Article 260(3), where a Member State did not communicate transposition measures by the deadline set in a directive, the Commission's infringement action pursuant to Article 258 TFEU may include a request for a lump sum or penalty payment, without needing to start a second action under Article 260(2) TFEU ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/2021-2027_en.

⁽²⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance_en.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en.

⁽⁴⁾ 2025 Environmental Implementation Review at https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-implementation-review_en.

⁽⁵⁾ In its assessment, the Court considers the Commission's request as well as, *inter alia*, the seriousness and duration of the infringement.

⁽⁶⁾ More information, including on financial sanctions, can be found at https://commission.europa.eu/law/application-eu-law/implementing-eu-law_en.