

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004363/25
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(5 November 2025)**

Subject: Potential breaches of the principles of competition and price transparency in the Catania Water Authority's awarding of the integrated water services contract

A legal dispute has been dragging on for years over the decision to award a 29-year contract worth more than EUR 2 billion to a hybrid public-private company called SIE ⁽¹⁾ to manage the Province of Catania's integrated water services. Both the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) and the Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment (ARERA) have received appeals and reports concerning the concession, which was also the subject of a case brought by ANCE ⁽²⁾ to the Regional Administrative Court of Sicily. The resulting judgment criticised the award procedure for potentially violating competition principles and for the absence of a valid scope plan for 2024-2027.

Meanwhile, residents suspect that local councils are applying the ARERA MTI-4 water bill calculation method by means of a process that is lacking transparency — a state of affairs that could, were the proposed scope plan and pricing system to be rejected, have repercussions for NRRP financing and lead to delays in upgrading the province's aqueducts, sewerage system and water purification facilities.

Could the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of the Catania Water Board's actions, and does it think that they comply with the EU's water directives ⁽³⁾ and its legislation governing public procurement and concessions?
2. Will the Commission call on the competent authorities to adopt the measures needed to safeguard the planned NRRP funding measures, ensure price transparency and protect water users?

Submitted: 5.11.2025

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

In accordance with the recast Drinking Water Directive ⁽¹⁾ provisions, which Italy has transposed into national legislation, Member States must ensure that information on the price of drinking water is provided to the consumers, for instance by means of an invoice.

In the case of water suppliers providing more than 10 000 m³ per day or serving at least 50 000 people, information on prices must be made accessible online, in a user friendly and customised way and information on the structure of the tariff has to be provided annually.

As regards compliance with the Concessions Directive ⁽²⁾, the Commission is not in a position to make an assessment based on the available information. The Commission services stand ready, however, to receive and examine further information.

The Commission will assess the completion of the projects financed by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) ⁽³⁾ in line with the requirements embedded in the relevant milestones and targets as outlined in the annex to the Council Implementing Decision on the approval of Italy's recovery and resilience plan (RRP) ⁽⁴⁾.

Servizi Idrici Etnei may be a beneficiary of some projects under investment M2C4.I4.2, reduction of losses in water distribution networks, including digitisation and monitoring of networks, whose last target will be assessed in the context of the ninth payment request submitted by Italy at the end of 2025.

¹ Servizi Idrici Etnei.

² The Association of Building Manufacturers of Italy.

³ See the EU's directives concerning public procurement/concessions, as well as Directive (EU) 2020/2184 on the quality of water intended for human consumption, Directive (EU) 2024/3019 on urban wastewater treatment and the Water Framework Directive's (2000/60/EC) provisions concerning transparency, competition, planning and cost recovery.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast), OJ L 435, 23.12.2020, p. 1-62.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concession contracts, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, pp. 1-64.

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

⁽⁴⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/italys-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en.

Member States' authorities are responsible for the selection of the projects financed under the RRF and are primarily responsible to ensure the compliance of the specific projects undertaken in the context of their national RRP with national and EU law.
