

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004812/25
to the Commission**

Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left), Elena Kountoura (The Left), Nikos Pappas (The Left), Nikolas Farantouris (The Left)

(4 December 2025)

Subject: Need to strengthen transnational coordination in the management of the Arda River and the protection of the Evros Regional Unit

Directives 2000/60/EC and 2007/60/EC provide for cooperation, data exchange and joint management planning in international river basins. In the case of the Arda River, the expiry (July 2024) of the sixty-year-old Greek-Bulgarian agreement, combined with the issuance of the non-binding Joint Declaration (May 2025), has left the river without a substantive institutional coordination mechanism.

The lack of binding cooperation procedures has led to a conflict between hydroelectric exploitation in Bulgaria and irrigation needs in Greece. The fact that last summer after the payment of EUR 2.1 million to the Bulgarian side, a quantity was released to the Greek side, which was not able to cover irrigation needs, highlights the limits of the current situation. This instability creates risks for social cohesion and the protection of the sensitive ecosystem of the Evros Delta, which depends on the supply of the Arda.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission assess the current non-binding framework for cooperation between Greece and Bulgaria, in relation to the above directives? Are the objectives of the directives, as referred to in Article 1 of each, being achieved?
2. Does the Commission consider that institutional strengthening of coordination is required and does it intend to encourage the establishment of a Permanent Joint Committee under the EU?

Submitted: 4.12.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission

(27 January 2026)

The Commission fosters cooperation on transboundary water management, in line with the objectives of Article 13 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽¹⁾, which sets a requirement for Member States to ensure coordination for the purpose of elaborating international river basin management plans.

Moreover, Article 12 of the WFD lays down that where a Member State identifies an issue which has an impact on the management of its water but cannot be resolved by that Member State, it may report the issue to the Commission and any other Member State concerned and may make recommendations for the resolution of it. Neither Bulgaria nor Greece have made a notification to the Commission under Article 12.

The Greek Bulgarian bilateral agreement on the River Arda was renewed on 2 May 2025 for a period of five years. Given their delay in reporting, the Commission is still currently assessing the third River Basin Management Plans of both Bulgaria and Greece and will consider in this context the state of play in relation to transboundary cooperation.

⁽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.