

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000487/26
to the Commission
Jonas Sjöstedt (The Left), Hanna Gedin (The Left)
(5 February 2026)**

Subject: Mining plans in Sweden and threats to drinking water supplies

Asera Mining, an Indian company, is planning to open a lithium mine in Västanå, near Indalsälven, one of Sweden's major rivers. MittSverige Vatten, the municipal water company, says the project poses a threat to the drinking water supply of around 100 000 people. It has warned that, owing to the area's specific natural characteristics, there is a risk of landslides and chemical spills, and maintains that Asera Mining has failed to carry out a proper assessment of the risks to water quality.

1. Is the Commission aware of Asera Mining's plans in Västanå, and how is the Commission monitoring developments?
2. What is the Commission's view of the threat to the drinking water supply of around 100 000 people?
3. Does the Commission take the view that such a decline in drinking water quality would be consistent with the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)?

Submitted: 5.2.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(7 April 2026)**

The Commission has not received any complaint or query in relation to the possible environmental impact of Asera Mining's plans in Västanå referred to by the Honourable Members.

It will be for the Swedish authorities, in examining the request for a permit, to ensure that environmental legislation is complied with. Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with EU law, including verifying individual cases of potential breach of the relevant rules.

In line with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽¹⁾, Member States must ensure that all water bodies achieve good status and take any necessary measures to prevent deterioration.

In line with Article 4(7) WFD, new projects, including mining operations, require a preliminary assessment of their impact on all potentially affected water bodies.

In the case of risk of deterioration, authorisation can only be granted subject to the strict conditions ⁽²⁾. As announced in the RESourceEU Action Plan ⁽³⁾, the Commission will shortly adopt guidance on the implementation of relevant provisions of the WFD in the context of the permitting of new projects, with a particular focus on the mining sector.

Moreover, as per Article 7(3) WFD, Member States must ensure the necessary protection of waters used for abstraction of drinking water to avoid deteriorating their quality.

Under the recast of the Drinking Water Directive ⁽⁴⁾, the quality of the water supplied to consumers has to comply with the minimum quality standards.

Member States have to ensure that a risk assessment and risk management are carried out in catchment areas for abstraction points.

⁽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, as amended by Commission Directive 2014/101/EU of 30 October 2014, OJ L 311, 31.10.2014, p. 32-35.

⁽²⁾ These include overriding public interest, lack of better environmental alternatives and that all practicable mitigation measures are taken.

⁽³⁾ COM(2025) 945 final RESourceEU Action Plan: Accelerating our critical raw materials strategy to adapt to a new reality.

⁽⁴⁾ 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.