

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000564/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(10 February 2026)**

Subject: Palermo agglomeration air quality, nitrogen dioxide from traffic, and state of play of relevant infringement procedure

In the December 2025 infringement package, the Commission decided to open an infringement procedure against Italy, by means of a letter of formal notice, for failing to meet the obligations laid down in Directive 2008/50/EC in relation to NO₂ pollution in the agglomerations of Naples and Palermo (INFR(2025)2187).

Air quality assessments in the urban area of Palermo highlight persistent problems associated, in particular, with road traffic emissions, with significant implications for the protection of public health.

Directive 2008/50/EC, particularly Article 23 on air quality plans, imposes appropriate measures to keep the exceedance period 'as short as possible', and the updated framework was introduced by means of Directive (EU) 2024/2881, applicable since 12 December 2026 (transposition deadline 11 December 2026).

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Which area/agglomeration under EU law does the part of the procedure on Palermo refer to, which years were taken into account, and which stations or assessment methods supported the decision?
2. Has it already examined the plans for Palermo and what technical shortcomings have been identified with regard to traffic emissions (structural measures, timetable, indicators, enforcement)?
3. What technical evidence does the Commission require for those places to demonstrate a credible path towards compliance, and what are the next procedural steps?

Submitted: 10.2.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(17 March 2026)**

The Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) Directive ⁽¹⁾ sets out limit values for the concentration of several pollutants in ambient air, including nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), in order to protect human health.

On 11 December 2025, the Commission opened infringement procedure INFR(2025)2187 ⁽²⁾ based on the reported exceedance of those limit values in the agglomerations of Palermo (at the urban traffic sampling points of PA — Castelnuovo, and PA — Di Blasi), as well as of Naples and Caserta, all between 2015 and 2024 ⁽³⁾.

The fact that a limit value for pollutants in ambient air is exceeded constitutes a failure to comply with Article 13(1), in conjunction with Annex XI to the AAQ Directive ⁽⁴⁾.

It is sufficient that a pollution level higher than that value is measured at a single sampling point to establish that a limit value has been exceeded in a given agglomeration ⁽⁵⁾.

Given the reported exceedances, the Commission has assessed the air quality plan adopted by the Sicilian region in order to determine whether the measures adopted were in line with the requirement to keep the exceedances as short as possible set out in Article 23(1).

On that basis, the Commission found in the above-mentioned infringement procedure that Italy has breached Article 23(1) of the AAQ Directive.

The Italian authorities have replied to the Commission on 11 February 2026. This reply is currently under assessment. Depending on the result of this assessment, the Commission may decide on the next step.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe, OJ L 152, 11.6.2008.

⁽²⁾ [https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2025\)2187&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2025)2187&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate).

⁽³⁾ Dataset (G) Information on the attainment of environmental objectives at <https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/it/eu/aqd/g/>.

⁽⁴⁾ Cf. among others: C-573/19, p. 96; C-635/18, p. 78; C-664/18, p. 54; and C-644/18, p. 71.

⁽⁵⁾ C-638/18, p. 44 and the case-law cited therein.

The Commission expects Italy to take, without delay, all necessary measures to put an end to the infringements listed in the letter of formal notice.
