(English version)

Question for written answer E-000920/26
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D)
(4 March 2026)

Subject: Transparency and consistency in the Commission debate on the Water Framework Directive

The Commission announced a roundtable discussion on the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in Stockholm, scheduled for 2 March 2026, which was subsequently cancelled. According to publicly available information prior to the event, the planned list of participants was largely dominated by representatives of the mining, metals and steel industries, while the participation of civil society organisations seemed very limited.

While in the European Water Resilience Strategy of June 2025 the Commission considered the WFD to be appropriate and prioritised its implementation, in its communication COM (2025)0980 of December 2025 it announced its intention to review it for possible obstacles to raw materials projects.

In view of this:

1. How does the Commission explain this change of approach in such a short time frame, moving from prioritising the implementation of the WFD to considering its revision?

2. Does the Commission consider that the discussion process with stakeholders ensures a genuine balance between industrial interests, public authorities, the scientific community and civil society?

3. Can the Commission guarantee that the direction of its future water initiatives is not unduly influenced by industrial and mining interests, but rather responds to the general interest and the best available scientific evidence?

Submitted: 4.3.2026

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(8 May 2026)

Better implementation and enforcement of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([1]) is and will continue to be a priority for the Commission.

The Commission is conducting Structured Water Dialogues with Member State to accelerate action on the ground. The call for evidence of the environmental omnibus highlighted possible problems in granting permits for the extractive industry, resulting from the WFD, hindering the achievement of the benchmarks for 2030 set out in the Critical Raw Materials Act ([2]).

These possible challenges arise against a backdrop of intensifying global competition for critical raw materials and the EU's growing reliance on single suppliers, creating systemic economic security risks.

This has led to a decision to review and revise the WFD. The online Call for Evidence ([3]), which closed on 14 April 2026, allowed all stakeholders to provide their views on this targeted revision.

This will be complemented by ad hoc consultations of experts representing all interested parties in the context of the Strategic Coordination Group under the Common Implementation Strategy of the WFD.

As for the specific meeting referred to by the Honourable Member, it had to be rescheduled on short notice since the President of the Commission called an emergency Security College focused on the evolving situation in Iran and the Middle East.

The Commission will be conducting an Impact Assessment for the targeted revision of the WFD that will be based on the evidence provided by all stakeholders in the Call for Evidence as well as other sources, including extensive data provided by the European Environment Agency ([4]).

([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]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020, OJ L, 2024/1252, 3.5.2024.
([3]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-launches-call-evidence-water-legislation-2026-03-17_en.
([4]) https://www.eea.europa.eu/en.