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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.7.2026)

The EU strategy for islands¹ recognises that islands face water-related challenges and recommends that Member States prioritise investments in water infrastructure to improve water services and distribution networks and increase water saving and water reuse, while restoring natural water retention.

Cohesion policy supports such investments by strengthening water resilience and sustainable water management. Reflecting the growing importance of water resilience, the mid-term review of cohesion policy² encouraged Member States to increase investments in sustainable water management, increased water efficiency, secure access to water and measures enhancing water resilience, resulting in the reallocation of EUR 1.6 billion to islands through cohesion policy programmes, including EUR 158 million for water-related investments.

The proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework³ provides that at least 35% of the EU budget should contribute to climate and environmental objectives, including water resilience, while continuing to support research and innovation projects that accelerate the green transition.

Water resilience is also reflected in the main funding programmes, in shared management, under the EU's proposed next long-term budget. It is an important element of the National and Regional Partnership Plans, with a climate and environmental contribution of at least 43%, which aim to ensure sustainable prosperity across all regions and maintain quality of life across the EU⁴. The European Competitiveness Fund⁵ will also support water resilience and the transition to a water-smart economy, through its clean Transition and Industrial Decarbonisation window.

¹ COM (2026) 520 final.

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/communication/mid-term-review-2025/communication-mid-term-review-2025_en.pdf.

³ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/eu-budget-2028-2034_en.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025PC0565R%2801%29&qid=1753697054840>.

⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-competitiveness-fund_en.