

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002624/26
to the Commission
Ana Miguel Pedro (PPE)
(25 June 2026)**

Subject: Pollution in the River Paiva threatening Portugal's natural resources

Pollution in the River Paiva poses a threat to the environmental, ecological, tourism and economic resources in the municipality of Arouca.

Recurring episodes of water quality deterioration in the River Paiva and some of its tributaries have been recorded for a number of years and have given rise to several complaints to the competent authorities.

The situation has grown worse in recent weeks, as evidenced by increased water turbidity, the presence of significant amounts of whitish foam and intense and unpleasant odours.

On 10 June 2026, signs of pollution appeared once again in the parishes of Canelas and Espiunca, in the municipality of Arouca, warranting further investigation.

1. Is the Commission aware of the above?
2. Does the Commission consider that the situation could constitute a breach of the obligations laid down in Directive 2000/60/EC, particularly as regards protection of the quality of surface water bodies in the River Paiva river basin?
3. Is the Commission in a position to urge the relevant municipal authorities to investigate and, where appropriate, take immediate corrective action to ensure EU environmental legislation is followed?

Submitted: 25.6.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(12 August 2026)**

The Commission has not received any information on the observations of water turbidity, whitish foam and odour formation on River Paiva reported by the Honourable Member and is therefore not in a position to assess whether the situation is caused by a breach of obligations under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽¹⁾.

According to the relevant third River Basin Management Plan, the River Paiva, at its passage through Canelas and Espiunca, was reported to be in good ecological and chemical status, indicating compliance with the WFD's goals for good surface water status ⁽²⁾.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible to ensure compliance with EU law, including verifying individual cases of potential breach of the relevant rules.

Consequently, it is for the competent authorities of the Member State concerned to establish appropriate monitoring programmes, maintain effective inspection mechanisms to detect unauthorised discharges, and apply the necessary enforcement measures when environmental standards are not met. In line with its strategic approach on enforcement action the Commission focuses on systemic non-compliance ⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Directive 2014/101/EU of 30 October 2014 amending Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 311, 31.10.2014, p. 32-35.

⁽²⁾ Surface water body status can be viewed here: <https://discomap.eea.europa.eu/wise-freshwaterviewer/>.

⁽³⁾ Communication from the Commission — EU law: Better results through better application, OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, p. 10-20, and Communication from the Commission — Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers, 13.10.2022, COM(2022) 518 final.