

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002853/26
to the Commission
Dario Tamburrano (The Left), Ignazio Roberto Marino (Verts/ALE)
(9 July 2026)**

Subject: The incinerator in Rome and safeguarding drinking water resources

The site that the Roman municipal authorities have earmarked for the capital's new incinerator had, until 18 November 2022 ⁽¹⁾, been off-limits to waste treatment plants because it had been included ⁽²⁾ in the Lazio Region's environmental restrictions system ⁽³⁾ as part of the process of drawing the boundaries of the protection area for the Laurentino water wells (which provide drinking water to the town of Ardea ⁽⁴⁾).

In March 2025, the Lazio Region decided to call off the Laurentino protection area mapping procedure ⁽⁵⁾. The decision was taken at the request of ACEA, a multi-utility company which manages the water network and is controlled by the municipal authorities ⁽⁶⁾.

ACEA cited the 2016 ⁽⁷⁾ discovery of chlorine-based pollutants in the Laurentino aquifer and the possibility of switching to other (as-yet-unspecified) sources of water as being the reasons behind its decision.

The Laurentino wells ⁽⁹⁾ will continue to supply Ardea ⁽⁸⁾ on an indefinite basis.

ACEA's request does nothing to address the damage that has already been done to the Laurentino wells and could, in fact, expose the aquifer to new sources of pollution. It could, additionally, constitute a conflict of interest, as ACEA heads the consortium responsible for building the Rome incinerator ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Having regard for infringement procedures INFR (2025) 2207 and INFR (2026) 2038 and two cases similar to the one in question — namely the recent measures authorising the construction on the outskirts of Rome of the Salone and Casal Selce ⁽¹¹⁾ biodigesters, the latter of which is the subject of an ongoing appeal before the Court of Justice of the European Union ⁽¹²⁾ — could the Commission clarify whether, in relation to the matter at hand, Italy is correctly applying the Water Framework Directive?

Submitted: 9.7.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(2 September 2026)**

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽¹⁾ requires Member States to prevent the deterioration of status of water bodies and to carry out a prior assessment of the potential impacts of a new project if it may pose a risk in this respect.

The assessment can be combined with an environmental impact assessment (EIA) or other assessments required under EU or national law.

Article 7 WFD requires Member States to identify and monitor the water bodies used for abstracting drinking water, and to ensure the necessary protection to avoid deterioration, including through the possible establishment of safeguard zones.

This Article requires that the resulting water meets the minimum quality standards set by the Drinking Water Directive (DWD) ⁽²⁾. Under the DWD, Member States must ensure that, by July 2027, a risk assessment and risk management is carried out in catchment areas for abstraction points, in relation to hazardous events that potentially cause harm to human health.

¹ The date on which the environmental restrictions system was overhauled.

² <https://shorturl.at/pXFTB>. The text and tables in question are no longer available online. We have uploaded them for reference purposes. The text can be accessed here: <https://shorturl.at/GrYIn>. The Lazio Region's environmental restrictions Map for Zone A can be accessed at <https://shorturl.at/JzX9F> (Zone B only covers the City of Rome and is already included in the Zone A map).

³ This single document lists all the restrictions that can prevent the construction of waste installations.

⁴ Which has a population of 51 000.

⁵ Because this document is also unavailable online, we have uploaded a copy here: <https://shorturl.at/Nf1ls>.

⁶ We have also attached a map comparing the areas covered by the current environmental restrictions system with those protected under the previous system (which was overhauled on 18.11.2022).

⁷ Attached.

⁸ Whose water undergoes a purification process before being pumped into the mains.

⁹ <https://www.idricaspa.com/servizio-idrico/>.

¹⁰ <https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/notizia/al-via-lavori-termovalorizzatore-roma-maggio-2026.page>.

¹¹ See Question for written answer E-002339/2026,

¹² <https://www.romatoday.it/zone/aurelio/boccea/biodigestore-casal-selce-ricorso-corte-europea-fase-preliminare.html>.

⁽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.

⁽²⁾ Directive (EU) 2020/2184 on the quality of water intended for human consumption, OJ L 435, 23.12.2020, p.1-62. This directive regulates the quality of drinking water in the EU.

According to publicly available information, competent authorities assessed the potential impact of the project on water as part of the PAUR ⁽³⁾, which includes the EIA, and concluded that, based on strict conditions to avoid withdrawals and pollution impacts, the project would not entail a deterioration of the status of the affected water bodies ⁽⁴⁾. It should be noted that INFR(2025)2207 and INFR(2026)2038 are not relevant for the matter at hand ⁽⁵⁾.

The Commission has thus no evidence that the WFD has not been correctly applied by Italy in this case ⁽⁶⁾. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission monitors Member States compliance with EU law, focusing its enforcement action on systemic issues of non-compliance ⁽⁷⁾. National courts are competent to verify compliance with EU law for individual cases.

⁽³⁾ Provvedimento Autorizzatorio Unico Regionale.

⁽⁴⁾ The Lazio Region issued a positive opinion with conditions, finding the project compatible with the regional Water Protection Plan. Generally positive opinions or positive opinions with conditions were also issued by the Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale dell'Appennino Centrale and the Dipartimento III 'Ambiente e Tutela del Territorio' of the Rome Metropolitan City.

⁽⁵⁾ INFR(2025)2207 concerns the non-conform transposition of Article 11(3) WFD in Italy, and in particular the obligation to periodically review, and update, if needed, the controls over different types of water use, foreseen by Article 11(3)(e). INFR(2026)2038 concerns the non-conform transposition of various provisions of the DWD in Italy, which are not relevant for the case at hand.

⁽⁶⁾ With respect to the other two cases mentioned, the Commission refers the Honorable Members to its reply to Written Question E-002339/2026 regarding the Salone biodigester. Concerning the Casal Selce biodigester, it must be noted that the appeal mentioned is in front of the European Court of Human Rights and concerns compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, so it is not relevant for the case at hand.

⁽⁷⁾ As set out in Communication of 19 January 2017 'EU law: Better results through better application', C/2016/8600, OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, and in Communication of 13 October 2022 'Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers', COM(2022) 518 final.