

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002867/24
to the Commission
Anna Bryłka (P/E)
(11 December 2024)**

Subject: Storage of natural fertilisers

In the matter of natural fertiliser storage obligations, Directive 91/676/EEC (the Nitrates Directive) provides that livestock operators will have a period of time to adjust the area or capacity of facilities for the storage of natural fertilisers. These obligations present a major challenge for all farms, and especially for those with fewer than 210 livestock units (LSU). In July 2024, the Polish Government requested that the Commission extend the deadline for adjusting the relevant areas/capacities of facilities for the storage of natural fertilisers for farms with livestock stocking densities of up to 210 LSU to 31 December 2027.

What is the Commission's decision in this regard?

Submitted: 11.12.2024

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(9 January 2025)**

The Nitrates Directive ⁽¹⁾ requires farms to have sufficient storage capacity to avoid spreading livestock manure on their fields during the sensitive winter period, where the risk of leaching and runoff to ground and surface waters is the greatest.

This requirement helps prevent pollution of ground and surface waters. It also allows for a more efficient use of livestock manure, an organic fertiliser, by spreading it during the growing season when the plants most need it.

The storage requirement necessitates investments. Most Polish farms therefore have had a six-year transition period after the requirement was extended to the whole country in 2018 as part of the implementation of the judgment in Case C-356/13 *Commission v Poland* ⁽²⁾.

The Commission is aware that some farms are still facing challenges in complying with the deadline and is in contact with the competent Polish authorities on the matter.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources, OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1-8.

⁽²⁾ <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?language=en&jur=C,T,F&num=C-356/13&td=ALL>