

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001580/26
to the Commission**

Anne-Sophie Frigout (Pfe), Mathilde Androuët (Pfe), Rody Tolassy (Pfe), Marie-Luce Brasier-Clain (Pfe), Virginie Joron (Pfe), Pierre Pimpie (Pfe), Laurent Castillo (Pfe), Mélanie Disdier (Pfe)
(16 April 2026)

Subject: Repayment of subsidies granted to France to implement low-emission zones

The Air Quality Directive ⁽¹⁾ sets EU targets for reducing air pollution while leaving it up to Member States what instruments they use to achieve those targets.

France has thereby benefited from EU subsidies ⁽²⁾ to help reach those targets. Some of the subsidies were conditional on France adopting its Climate and Resilience Law and on it carrying out impact assessments for low-emission zones (LEZs) — obligations which it has complied with. However, the French Parliament has just scrapped LEZs, which represented a new form of social segregation and whose environmental impact had not been sufficiently proven.

In light of the above:

1. Can the Commission specify the details and amount of the aid received by France to implement LEZs?
2. Can it confirm that it is not in a position to initiate infringement proceedings against France since LEZs are not harmonised by EU legislation?
3. Can it confirm that, after receiving the subsidies, France may adjust how it uses them, and that there is therefore no obligation for it to repay those amounts, since it is only changing how it achieves the established targets, not doing away with them altogether?

Submitted: 16.4.2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(28 May 2026)

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) operates on a performance basis, with disbursements depending on the achievement of groups of milestones and targets.

In case of entirely positive assessments, the instalment corresponding to the group of milestones and targets is disbursed. If specific milestones and targets are not fulfilled, an amount is suspended based on a detailed methodology ⁽¹⁾.

The implementation of the Climate and Resilience Law ⁽²⁾ (measure C2.R1 of the Council implementing decision approving the French Recovery and Resilience Plan) was assessed through one milestone (promulgation of the law) and one target (completing regulatory studies for Low Emission Zones in 18 agglomerations), both positively assessed by the Commission under the second and fourth payment request under the RRF, allowing associated funds to be released.

Regarding compliance with the Air Quality Directive, in its role of guardian of the Treaties ⁽³⁾, the Commission may take legal action against a Member State that fails to comply with EU law.

Furthermore, pursuant to Article 24(3) of the RRF Regulation ⁽⁴⁾, the Commission has presented the framework it applies for addressing cases in which previously satisfactorily fulfilled milestones and targets under the RRF have been reversed by the Member State (so-called reversals) ⁽⁵⁾.

Once a reversal has been established, no further milestone or target can be considered satisfactorily fulfilled, until the reversal is addressed.

¹ Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe.

² Through the Recovery and Resilience Facility fund, as part of the NextGenerationEU recovery plan.

⁽¹⁾ Annex II of the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council — Recovery and Resilience Facility: Two years on A unique instrument at the heart of the EU's green and digital transformation, COM (2023) 99 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023DC0099>.

⁽²⁾ See page 10 of the annex to Council Implementing Decision of the RRP for France, COM (2025) 722 final: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/547b517f-e6dd-4821-a6c9-9d513674b02d_en?filename=COM_2025_722_1_EN_annexe_proposition_cp_part1_v3.pdf.

⁽³⁾ According to Articles 258 and 260 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/241/oj/eng>.

⁽⁵⁾ Annex II of the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Recovery and Resiliency Facility: Moving forward, COM (2023) 545 final/2: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023DC0545R%2801%29>.

The Commission is monitoring the debate in France on Low Emission Zones and will analyse its implications with regard to compliance with the Air Quality Directive and France's commitments under the RRF once the legislative procedure is completed.
