



2020/2613(RSP)

9.6.2020

# DRAFT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Questions for Oral Answer B9-0000/2020 and B9-0000/2020

pursuant to Rule 136(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on Implementation of the EU water legislation  
(2020/2613(RSP))

**Christophe Hansen, Sara Cerdas, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Marco Dreosto,  
Martin Häusling, Joanna Kopcińska, Malin Björk, Eleonora Evi**  
on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food  
Safety

**European Parliament resolution on Implementation of the EU water legislation (2020/2613(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy (“Water Framework Directive” - WFD)<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration (“Groundwater Directive”)<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2008/105/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directives 82/176/EEC, 83/513/EEC, 84/156/EEC, 84/491/EEC, 86/280/EEC and amending Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (“Environmental Quality Standards Directive”)<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks (“Floods Directive”)<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991, concerning urban waste-water treatment (“Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive - UWWTD”)<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the Evaluation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast)<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1–73

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19–31

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 84–97

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27–34

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40–52

<sup>6</sup> SWD (2019)439 and executive summary available in SWD (2019)440

<sup>7</sup> SWD (2019)700 and executive summary available in SWD (2019)701

<sup>8</sup> currently under adoption in plenary

<sup>9</sup> COM(2017) 753 final, 1.2.2018

emergency<sup>10</sup>,

- having regard to the report of the European Environment Agency on the European environment — state and outlook 2020: Knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe<sup>11</sup>,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Green Deal<sup>12</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>13</sup>,
- having regard to the Farm to Fork Strategy<sup>14</sup>,
- having regard to 7th Environmental Action Programme<sup>15</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication on the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan<sup>16</sup>,
- having regard to the Communication on the Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe of 11 March 2020<sup>17</sup>,
- having regard to the Communication of Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation<sup>18</sup>,
- having regard to the Communication on European Union Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment of 11 March 2019<sup>19</sup>,
- having regard to the joint study by the European Commission and the OECD on Financing Water Supply, Sanitation and Flood Protection - Challenges in EU Member States and Policy Options of May 2020<sup>20</sup>,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and particularly Sustainable

---

<sup>10</sup> 2019/2930(RSP)

<sup>11</sup> available at <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/soer-2020>

<sup>12</sup> COM(2019) 640

<sup>13</sup> COM(2020) 380

<sup>14</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, COM(2020) 381 final, 20.05.2020

<sup>15</sup> Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 ‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’, OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 171–200

<sup>16</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Sustainable Europe Investment Plan European Green Deal Investment Plan, COM/2020/21 final, 14.1.2020

<sup>17</sup> COM(2020) 98

<sup>18</sup> COM(2020) 456

<sup>19</sup> COM (2019) 128

<sup>20</sup> available on <http://www.oecd.org/environment/financing-water-supply-sanitation-and-flood-protection-6893cdac-en.htm>

Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation<sup>21</sup>,

- having regard to the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of May 2019<sup>22</sup>,
  - having regard to the European Citizens' Initiative 'Right2Water'<sup>23</sup>,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of [1 July 2020] on the Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive<sup>24</sup>,
  - having regard to opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 12 December 2018 on 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse (rolling programme)'<sup>25</sup>,
  - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the Oral Questions to the Council and the Commission on the Implementation of the EU water legislation <sup>26</sup>,
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
- A. whereas water is an inalienable public asset that is essential for life, and water management plays a vital role in the preservation of the EU's ecosystem services as well as in resource use and economic production; whereas Europe has to find effective responses to the current water challenges and manage existing water resources efficiently, as they directly affect human health, energy production, agriculture and food security;
- B. whereas the Water Framework Directive established a framework to protect 110.000 surface water bodies in the EU, aiming to achieve 'good ecological and chemical status' by 2015; whereas the Fitness Check found important shortcomings in the implementation of EU water legislation, which status is unlikely to be achieved by the 2027 deadline;
- C. whereas good chemical status has been achieved for only 38% of surface waters and just 40% is in good ecological status or potential;
- D. whereas the effectiveness of the WFD depends upon its implementation by the Member States;
- E. whereas water abstraction puts an important pressure on EU waters; whereas about a quarter of water diverted from the natural environment in the EU is used for agriculture; whereas an agreement on the new Regulation on water reuse was reached, which will

---

<sup>21</sup> contained in Resolution 70/1 adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<sup>22</sup> Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), available on <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>

<sup>23</sup> [www.right2water.eu](http://www.right2water.eu)

<sup>24</sup> <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-541-2020>

<sup>25</sup> OJ C 110, 22.3.2019, p. 94–98

<sup>26</sup> O [000XXX/YYYY] and O [000XXX/YYYY]

facilitate the use of treated urban waste water for agricultural irrigation;

- F. whereas the main point source of water pollution in the EU is the discharge of untreated or inadequately treated urban and/or industrial waste water; whereas the main diffuse source of water pollution is agriculture, with releases of nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants;
  - G. whereas it is of crucial importance to tackle chemical pollution in surface and groundwater wherever possible at source as the most cost-effective measure;
  - H. whereas the Fitness Check found that the WFD “is sufficiently prescriptive with regard to the pressures to be addressed, and yet flexible enough to reinforce its implementation as necessary with regard to emerging challenges not mentioned in the Directive such as climate change, water scarcity and pollutants of emerging concern”;
  - I. whereas freshwater biodiversity is threatened in Europe; whereas healthy and resilient freshwater ecosystems are better able to mitigate the effects of, and adapt to climate change;
  - J. whereas one third of European countries suffer from water scarcity, i.e. they have less than 5000 m<sup>3</sup> of water per head annually;<sup>27</sup>
  - K. whereas water is an essential element in the food cycle; whereas good quality of ground and surface waters is necessary to achieve a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system as described in the Farm to Fork Strategy;
  - L. whereas there are currently over 21.000 hydropower plants in Europe; whereas no comprehensive EU action has taken place for dam removal;
  - M. whereas the UWWTD was effective in reducing pollution to water bodies by reducing the loads of biochemical oxygen demand, nitrogen and phosphorus in treated waste water across the EU;
1. Welcomes the success of the WFD in setting up an adequate governance framework for integrated water management and in slowing down the deterioration of water quality;
  2. Welcomes the assessment of the Commission that the WFD is fit for purpose, yet its implementation needs to be improved and speeded up;
  3. Regrets that the objectives of the WFD still are not reached mainly due to inadequate funding, particularly slow implementation, insufficient enforcement and broad use of the exemptions of the Directive, that integration of environmental objectives in sectoral policies have been insufficient, and that half of the EU’s water bodies are still not in a good status;
  4. Notes that climate change can have a significant negative impact on freshwater sources with droughts leading to depleted river flows and higher concentrations of pollutants, and

---

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/92-9167-025-1/page003.html>

intense rainfall leading to increased urban and agricultural run-off; emphasises that increasing temperatures lead to increased water stress, impacting several economic sectors; underlines that resilience of water ecosystems, flooding and water scarcity should be duly taken into account in the upcoming EU climate adaptation strategy;

5. Notes that there is room for improvement in the area of chemicals; calls on the Commission to update relevant substances contained in the Annexes to the WFD; recommends the development of new guidelines on improved monitoring methods for chemical mixtures;
6. Notes that the “one-out-all-out”-principle should remain intact, yet poses a problem in the communication on progress made with regards to single parameters; calls for complementary reporting methodologies (such as distance to target);; highlights the importance of transparency and provision of comprehensive information to the public on the quality of water in the EU;
7. Deplores the use of exemptions for over half of Europe’s water bodies, with limited justification; calls for an update of guidance documents for the use of exemptions in order to reduce this practice;
8. Regrets that the cost-recovery principle, that foresees that all water users have an effective and proportionate financial participation, remains low to non-existent in several Member States; calls on Member States to consider and implement adequate water pricing policies and fully apply the cost recovery principle in line with the WFD; emphasises however that all citizens should have affordable access to water;
9. Highlights the importance of further addressing eutrophication of both fresh and salt waters caused by nitrogen and phosphorus from wastewater and other sources, including from agriculture;
10. Notes that hydropower stations provide the largest share of renewable energy in the EU, points out, however, that the construction of dams can negatively affect habitats and that the WFD imposes strict criteria for the protection of hydromorphological conditions; calls for strict assessments of the impacts of resulting alterations to water quality and ecosystems;
11. Notes that the shift from road freight to inland waterways should go hand in hand with support to sustainable, alternative fuels and technology for inland navigation to reduce GHG emissions and to avoid deterioration in the quality of water bodies;
12. Welcomes the fact that the UWWTD has delivered on the reduction of loads, thereby contributing to the improvement of water quality, regrets however, that the evaluation of the UWWTD does not analyse the effectiveness regarding discharges of industrial waste water into collecting systems and urban waste water plants;
13. Notes that the UWWTD does not sufficiently reflect the problems of storm water overflows and urban runoff, individual systems and small agglomerations;
14. Calls on Member States to achieve full compliance with the WFD as soon as possible, and in any case no later than 2027;

15. Calls on the Commission to support Member States in the implementation of the water Directives with technical assistance and appropriate training, by sharing good practices and expertise;
16. Calls on the Commission to take strict and swift action on pursuing infringements of Member States to ensure full compliance of all Member States with the WFD as soon as possible, and no later than 2027; urges the Commission to act on the open infringement cases related to systemic violation of the water legislation;
17. Stresses the need for alignment of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with the WFD regarding the need for increased water protection measures in agriculture; welcomes the inclusion of improved nutrient management as one of the objectives of the new CAP Strategic Plans and of the Biodiversity Strategy;
18. Urges the Commission to streamline and improve monitoring systems for water quality, collecting, among others, data on pesticide residue and metabolites in the water bodies in Europe;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop drought management strategies as part of the River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans;
20. Suggests to address droughts with projects for the reuse of disused quarries, transformed into basins to contain rainwater and flood waves; encourages research and investments in this direction;
21. Calls on the Member States to identify and secure the necessary funds and to step up efforts to maintain and reinvest in existing infrastructures that do not raise environmental or public health concerns; stresses the need to provide financial support for innovative methods and nature-based solutions;
22. Encourages a better integration of the Flood Risk Management directive in policies on prioritising nature-based solutions, and adjusting funding streams accordingly;
23. Calls for increased action at Union and Member State level to tackle pollutants of emerging concern, such as microplastics and pharmaceuticals;
24. Calls for improving public consultation, public awareness and education and stimulating inter-sectoral dialogue;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.