

**Question for written answer E-014181/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Water management in the EU - efficient irrigation

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Agua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources takes the view that the Commission's proposals on the reform of the common agricultural policy provide possibilities for funding to improve the efficiency of irrigation.

Water consumption in agriculture is very high in percentage terms in southern European countries, accounting for over 80 % of total consumption in some of them.

Increased efficiency in the use of irrigation can end up being counterproductive, because it often leads to an increase in the area irrigated or to more intensive crop-growing.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions requiring that:

1. in those basins or sub-basins where demand exceeds or is close to the supply of renewable water resources, an increase in the area irrigated not be permitted?
2. when the reference values laid down in the basin management plan (for that crop in that area or region) are exceeded, the price of water be increased progressively in such a way as to act as a disincentive and, at the same time, the price of water be reduced when consumption is below the reference values laid down?
3. improved efficiency in the use of water for irrigation be accompanied by a proportionate decrease in allocations, and must under no circumstances lead to an increase in the area irrigated or to crops being grown more intensively?
4. plans to improve efficiency ensure that the quality of the water returned to the environment after being used is at least equal to the quality of the water taken from the headwaters of the irrigable zone?