

**Question for written answer E-001228/2018  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Damiano Zoffoli (S&D)**

Subject: Scope of application of Article 4, paragraph 5, of Directive 2000/60/EC for exemption from the obligation of ecological flow of the Brenta and Piave rivers

In 2015, as part of the common implementation strategy of the Water Framework Directive, the Commission published guidelines for the ecological flow of rivers (CIS Guidance Document 31), implemented at national level in February 2017.

The Commission's guidelines list the exemptions from the environmental objectives under Article 4, paragraph 5, of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).

Can the Commission therefore answer the following:

- if the environmental and socioeconomic needs served by human activity on bodies of water cannot be met by other means, which are a significantly better environmental option not entailing disproportionate costs, can a river basin district apply for exemption from the application of ecological flow?
- Should this application for exemption be submitted directly to the Commission, or should it be sent via a Member State, which then makes the application to the Commission?
- Given that the Piave and Brenta rivers in the Veneto region are of vital importance to agriculture, and considering the need to provide detailed justification in accordance with section 9.3 of the CIS 31 Guide and section 3.3 of the CIS 20 Guide, can the above justify such an application by the river basin district of the Eastern Alps?