

**Question for written answer E-001600/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**José Gusmão** (The Left), **Marisa Matias** (The Left)

Subject: National Irrigation Programme with no scientific basis

The National Irrigation Programme approved in 2020 received public investment to the tune of EUR 534 million from the Rural Development Programme 2020 (EUR 267 million), the European Investment Bank (EUR 187 million) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (EUR 80 million). This program will be implemented primarily in the Alentejo region, though it is unclear why the government has decided to favour this particular region. The climate crisis calls for policies based on scientific knowledge and careful planning that take into account the current and future resilience of the various regions. No strategic environmental assessment was conducted to support the decisions taken in the context of this programme, even though this is recommended by both national and EU law. Supporting intensive monoculture by increasing the size of irrigated zones in already water-scarce areas is a mistake that will only aggravate the problem.

1. Regard being had to the objectives of social and environmental sustainability, will the Commission be calling on the Portuguese Government to promote broader distribution in the context of its irrigation programme?
2. Given that EU legislation provides that such programmes must be based on scientific evidence, does the Commission intend to urge the Portuguese Government to disclose its scientific basis for this distribution or, if there is no such basis, to carry out the necessary research?