

**Question for written answer E-004537/2021**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Maria Grapini (S&D)**

Subject: The 'polluter pays' principle

The 'polluter pays' principle dictates that polluters should bear the costs of the pollution they create, but this does not always happen in the EU. Although the principle is generally reflected in the EU's environmental policies, it does not cover every scenario and the way it is applied varies from sector to sector and from one Member State to another. This means that clean-up operations are sometimes financed using public monies, rather than being paid for by the polluters.

There are around 3 million sites in the EU that are potentially contaminated, largely as a result of industrial activity and waste treatment and disposal operations. Six out of every ten bodies of surface water, such as rivers and lakes, are chemically polluted and in poor ecological condition. EU householders bear the lion's share of the cost of this, despite consuming just 10% of all the water consumed. All of this creates considerable costs for EU citizens.

1. Is the Commission considering amending EU legislation so that the EU citizens no longer have to bear the burden of pollution costs?
2. Does it not feel it should force industries to meet the costs of residual pollution and its impact? The Industrial Emissions Directive regrettably fails to cover this aspect.