

**Priority question for written answer P-001423/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Draining of reservoirs by Iberdrola during the current state of drought

According to the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, a quarter of the territory of the European Union is in a state of drought<sup>1</sup>, with Spain being one of the most affected countries<sup>2</sup>. In this situation of drought, high temperatures, lack of rainfall and dry soils, Iberdrola is said to have drained 600 000 million litres of water from the Tagus river basin in the last quarter, equivalent to one year's supply for nine million people<sup>3</sup>. Iberdrola is again doing this following the draining of reservoirs in previous summers, when they accelerated the release of water to generate hydroelectric power to sell it at the – much higher – price of gas in order to increase its windfall profits<sup>4</sup>. Bearing in mind that the Water Framework Directive aims to ensure sufficient supply of groundwater or surface water and to mitigate the effects of droughts and floods:

1. Does the Commission consider that the emptying of reservoirs for private economic ends is in breach of the Water Framework Directive?
2. How will the Commission ensure that energy companies do not exacerbate climate disasters?
3. What measures does the Commission envisage to prevent water speculation in order to ensure fair access and good resource management?

Submitted: 2.5.2023

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the European Drought Observatory: <https://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/edov2/php/index.php?id=1111>

<sup>2</sup> Report on the state of drought and water shortage by the Spanish Government's Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Democratic Challenge. April 2023: [https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/agua/temas/observatorio-nacional-de-la-sequia/informe\\_sequiayescasez\\_abr2023\\_tcm30-486646.pdf](https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/agua/temas/observatorio-nacional-de-la-sequia/informe_sequiayescasez_abr2023_tcm30-486646.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Iberdrola again emptied reservoirs in Extremadura to produce electricity in the middle of a drought. *EL Salto*. Available at: <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/sequia/iberdrola-vacia-pantanos-extremadura-producir-energia-electrica-mitad-sequia>

<sup>4</sup> The Government describes the emptying of reservoirs by Iberdrola to produce cheaper energy as 'scandalous'. Available at: <https://elpais.com/economia/2021-08-13/teresa-ribera-investigara-el-vaciado-de-embalses-por-parte-de-iberdrola-para-producir-energia-mas-barata.html>