



Plenary sitting

B10-0238/2026

12.5.2026

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to question for oral answer B10-0008/2026

pursuant to Rule 142(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) and risks to the security of supply of medicines (2026/2652(RSP))

Vlad Vasile-Voiculescu
on behalf of the Renew Group

B10-0238/2026

European Parliament resolution on the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) and risks to the security of supply of medicines (2026/2652(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to Directive (EU) 2024/3019 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 concerning urban wastewater treatment¹ (Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive),
 - having regard to the Commission staff working document of 26 October 2022 entitled ‘impact assessment accompanying the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning urban wastewater treatment’ (SWD(2022)0541),
 - having regard to the Joint Research Centre study entitled ‘Updated estimation of the costs of quaternary wastewater treatment in the EU’, published on 10 December 2025,
 - having regard to the polluter pays principle, as set out in Article 191(2) TFEU,
 - having regard to the European Green Deal and the zero pollution action plan,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and risks to the security of supply of medicines (O-000013/2026 – B10-0008/2026),
 - having regard to Rules 142(5) and 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas water is essential for life and humanity; whereas the EU must manage current and future water resources efficiently and respond effectively to current water challenges, as they directly affect human health, the environment and its ecosystems, and strategic socio-economic activities;
- B. whereas climate change is increasing water scarcity and variability, while demand for water continues to rise; whereas the untapped potential for wastewater reuse is estimated at around 320 billion m³ per year; whereas the EU’s ability to respond to growing pressures on water resources depends on significantly increasing the reuse of treated urban wastewater, thereby limiting freshwater abstraction from surface and groundwater bodies;
- C. whereas urban wastewater is one of the main sources of water pollution, if not properly collected and treated; whereas the objectives of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) should not be lowered, and its scope should be proportionate to

¹ OJ L, 2024/3019, 12.12.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/3019/oj>.

sectors and substances that contribute to water pollution;

- D. whereas the UWWTD sets the legal framework for collecting, treating and discharging urban wastewater, and for discharging biodegradable wastewater from certain industrial sectors;
 - E. whereas the extended producer responsibility system ensures that producers placing on the EU market products containing substances, which, at the end of their life, are found as micropollutants in urban wastewater, take responsibility for the quaternary treatment needed to remove micropollutants from urban wastewater, generated as part of their professional activities;
 - F. whereas the extended producer responsibility system is the most effective tool for implementing the polluter pays principle set out in Article 191(2) TFEU;
 - G. whereas the extended producer responsibility system is also the most appropriate means of achieving the removal of micropollutants resistant to secondary and tertiary treatment, or for which these stages of treatment show low efficiency of removal, via quaternary treatment, as it limits the financial impact on the taxpayer and water tariffs, while providing an incentive to develop biodegradable products;
 - H. whereas the security of supply of medicines in the EU must be safeguarded, and implementing the UWWTD should not inadvertently jeopardise the accessibility, availability and affordability of medicines; whereas, at the same time, substances, including antibiotics, that are ineffectively treated by other stages of treatment should be removed from urban waste water to reduce risks to the environment and human health, including risk of the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance;
 - I. whereas the Member States, via national implementation programmes, should take into consideration and mitigate the possible impacts of applying the requirements of the extended producer responsibility system on the accessibility, availability and affordability of medicines, especially generics, placed on the EU market;
 - J. whereas the UWWTD provides for a long implementation timeline, with the full application of certain provisions being extended until 2045, providing sufficient time for a gradual and balanced implementation of the directive and the quaternary treatment obligations, namely 20 % coverage by 2033, 60 % by 2039, and full coverage by 2045;
- 1. Underlines the importance of the UWWTD in protecting public health and the environment, while stressing the need to avoid unintended consequences for the accessibility, availability and affordability of medicines;
 - 2. Emphasises the urgency of addressing, primarily at the source, and effectively monitoring pollution from harmful substances in the environment in order to align with the EU's zero pollution ambition and the goal of achieving good chemical status for all water bodies, as well as recognising the importance of adopting measures needed to inform consumers about waste prevention measures, take-back and collection systems, and the impact of inappropriate means of waste disposal of the respective substances, as well as their misuse- and over-use;

3. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the polluter pays principle is fully applied when implementing the UWWTD, particularly by requiring polluters to contribute to the costs of removing hazardous substances from wastewater, including through extended producer responsibility schemes;
4. Recalls that the revised UWWTD imposes new obligations regarding urban wastewater quaternary treatment, requiring pharmaceutical and cosmetic producers to cover at least 80 % of the costs of removing micropollutants from wastewater, in order to reduce harmful substances in the environment; stresses that the remaining 20 % of the costs for removing micropollutants remain the responsibility of the Member States, which retain the discretion to either assume these costs themselves or allocate them to the relevant polluting sectors via an extended producer responsibility scheme;
5. Recalls that the extended producer responsibility system aims to finance the removal of micropollutants from wastewater and to encourage less toxic, more biodegradable products to be developed, which are exempt from extended producer responsibility, incentivising and rewarding innovation as regards less harmful substances in the concerned sectors;
6. Notes that pharmaceuticals and cosmetic residues currently represent the main sources of micropollutants found in urban wastewater requiring quaternary treatment; recalls that the Commission, based on the results of regular urban wastewater monitoring and the most recent scientific data, should evaluate whether other sectors should be included in the extended producer responsibility system;
7. Urges the Member States, in the context of their national implementation programmes under Article 23 and Recital 21 of the UWWTD, to adopt all necessary mitigating measures to guarantee the accessibility, availability and affordability of medicines across the EU;
8. Stresses that the financial responsibility for quaternary treatment should not fall on municipalities or water users, but be shared equitably among the main polluters in line with the polluter pays principle;
9. Calls for EU support to be provided to local authorities for modernising wastewater treatment plants and promoting water reuse in order to align with the EU's zero pollution ambition, ensuring that municipal wastewater management contributes effectively to good chemical and ecological water status;
10. Insists on integrating circular economy principles to reduce hazardous chemical use in industrial processes; stresses the need for additional funding to support industries in transitioning to clean technologies that minimise water pollution;
11. Highlights the need for coordinated EU action to harmonise standards and best practices for removing pharmaceutical and cosmetic residues, while avoiding distortions in the internal market and ensuring fair competition;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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