



European Commission

Zero pollution: New rules on treating urban wastewater

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#EUGreenDeal

The new EU rules on managing urban wastewater will:

Reduce **pollution, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions**



Urban wastewater sector is one of **biggest consumers of energy** in the public sector

Improve **water quality** by addressing remaining urban wastewater pollution



98% of EU wastewater adequately collected but **pollution from smaller cities, septic tanks and storm water overflows** remains

Improve **access to sanitation** especially for the most vulnerable and marginalised



Around **10 million Europeans** still lack access to basic sanitation services

Make **industry pay to treat micropollutants**



Micropollutants from pharmaceuticals and cosmetics end up in rivers, lakes and seas

Require EU countries to **monitor pathogens in wastewater**



This will help **manage pandemics** as already done during the COVID-19 pandemic

Lead to a more **circular sector**



This can increase for example the reuse of **treated water and sludge**

By 2040 the new rules will:

- Save almost **€3 billion** per year across the EU
- Reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** in the sector by **over 60%** compared to 1990
- Decrease water pollution (organic matter, nitrogen and phosphorous) by more than **365 thousand tonnes** per year by 2040
- Cut **microplastics emissions** by 9% per year by 2040

Environment

Key measures

→ Reducing pollution by:



- ▶ Introducing integrated planning obligations to better handle **heavy rain**
- ▶ Enlarging the scope to cover **small cities**
- ▶ Better controlling **septic tanks**
- ▶ Introducing **stricter thresholds** for removing **nutrients**
- ▶ Introducing new additional treatment for **micropollutants**
- ▶ Introducing **health parameters** to monitor pandemics



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→ Aligning with Green Deal objectives by:



- ▶ Requiring the sector to produce as much renewable energy as it consumes in fossil energy by 2040, therefore becoming **energy-neutral**
- ▶ Tracking **non-household** pollution at source
- ▶ Incentivising the **reuse and recovery** of water, sludge and phosphorus



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→ More effective and enforceable rules by:



- ▶ **Making polluters pay** for removing micropollutants, especially most toxic ones
- ▶ **Increasing transparency** by making operators publish key performance indicators
- ▶ **Improving access to sanitation** especially for the vulnerable and marginalised by requiring EU countries to identify those affected and take measures to address their lack of access



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