



European Commission - Fact Sheet

March infringements package: main decisions

Brussels, 26 March 2015

Environment: Commission asks ITALY to improve collection and treatment of wastewater

The European Commission is asking **Italy** to improve the collection and treatment of waste water from a large number of agglomerations around the country. Under EU law, towns and cities are required to collect and treat their [urban waste water](#), as untreated waste water can put human health at risk and pollute lakes, rivers, soil and coastal and groundwater. EU law stipulates that secondary treatment had to be in place for all wastewater from agglomerations with a [population equivalent](#) of between 10 000 and 15 000 inhabitants, and for discharges to sensitive areas such as freshwater and estuaries from agglomerations of between 2000 and 10 000 inhabitants by 2005. The deadline was in 2000 for all discharges from agglomerations with a population equivalent of more than 15 000. More stringent treatment had to be in place by 1998 for all discharges from agglomerations with a population equivalent of more than 10 000, discharging into sensitive areas and their catchments. The Commission considers that 817 agglomerations in Italy with a population equivalent of more than 2000 are failing to collect and adequately treat their waste water. Among the larger agglomerations there are Rome, Florence, Naples and Bari. Some agglomerations are also failing in the obligation to apply more stringent treatment to discharges to sensitive areas. Some 20 Regions and Autonomous Provinces are concerned: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Bolzano, Calabria, Campania, Emilia Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardia, Marche, Piemonte, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana, Trento, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto. Italy is also failing in the requirement to remove phosphorus and nitrogen from discharges to 32 sensitive areas. Exchanges with Italy have confirmed what the Commission views as a systematic breach of EU obligations, and a reasoned opinion has therefore been sent. Unless concrete measures are taken to put an end to the failure as soon as possible, the case may be referred to the EU Court of Justice.