

Recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

POLICY BRIEF

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INTRODUCTION

The revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive will aim to ensure **cleaner water bodies** in Europe, while also increasing the **cost-effectiveness of wastewater treatment**. This will include obligations on EU member states to recover nutrients from wastewater, new standards for micropollutants and new monitoring requirements for microplastics.

Importantly, the Commission proposal introduces the concept of **Extended Producer Responsibility**, directly targeting businesses in the **pharmaceuticals** and **cosmetics** industries. If adopted, it would mean that polluters involved in these activities will be obliged to pay financial contribution to cover the cost of removing micro-pollutants from EU wastewater. Some exemptions are provided. The Commission argues that 92% of toxic micro-pollutants found in EU wastewater are derived from these industries.

The proposal is part of a wider [EU package on Zero Pollution](#), aiming to reduce ambient air and water pollution in Europe.



PROVISIONS CONCERNING PHARMACEUTICALS & COSMETICS INDUSTRIES

SCOPE

Article 9 of the Commission proposal stipulates that producers that place any of the products listed below on the EU market should carry extended producer responsibility:

Industrially produced medicinal products for human use. This does **not** include:

- Any medicinal product prepared in a pharmacy in accordance with a medical prescription for an individual patient (commonly known as the magistral formula).
- Any medicinal product which is prepared in a pharmacy in accordance with the prescriptions of a pharmacopoeia and is intended to be supplied directly to the patients served by the pharmacy in question (commonly known as the official formula).
- Medicinal products intended for research and development trials.
- Intermediate products intended for further processing by an authorized manufacturer.
- Any radionuclides in the form of sealed sources.
- Whole blood, plasma or blood cells of human origin.

Any cosmetic product made available on the market.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility placed on producers falling under the scope of this proposal include covering the full cost of:

- **Quaternary treatment** of urban wastewater to remove micro-pollutants resulting from the products and their residues.
- **Monitoring** of micro-pollutants.
- **Gathering and verifying data** on products placed on the market.
- Costs required to exercise their extended producer responsibility.

Producers may be exempt from this responsibility if the quantity of the product placed on the market does not exceed 2 tonnes per annum, or if the product does not generate micro-pollutants in wastewater at their end of life.

Each producer's **financial contribution** would be determined based on the quantities and hazardousness in the wastewaters of the products placed on the EU market.

In this respect, producers would be obliged to provide the annual quantities of applicable products placed on the market, information on the hazardousness of these products, and (where applicable) information on which products are exempted from this requirement as mentioned above.

Producers will also be obliged to appoint a legal or natural person to act as an authorized representative for the purposes of fulfilling this extended producer responsibility.

The full text of the Commission proposal may be found [here](#).

For questions or more detailed information please contact EU Affairs Manager Daniel Debono and Senior Policy Executive (Sustainable Development) Gabriel Cassar on infobrussels@mbb.org.mt

