

European Union Solidarity Fund

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The Commission presents the 2014 annual report on the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF). The report presents the treatment of new applications and the assessment of implementation reports with a view to preparing these for closure. It also addresses the [Regulation amending the EUSF Regulation](#) which was adopted in June 2014.

In financial terms, in the course of 2014, the Commission approved aid from the EUSF amounting to a **total of EUR 126.725 million**.

Applications received: in the course of 2014, the Commission received thirteen new applications for EUSF assistance, which is above the average in terms of the number of applications. The Commission **accepted seven of these applications, two were rejected** and for four applications assessments could only be completed in 2015.

More specifically, the applications concerned:

- **Floods in Sardinia (Italy):** the Italian authorities estimated total direct damage at EUR 652.419 million. The disaster did not qualify as a "major natural disaster". However, it did qualify as an extraordinary regional disaster and was accepted by the Commission. Given that lengthy negotiations with Council and the European Parliament on the corresponding Amending Budget were completed only on 17 December 2014, it was necessary to **carry-over the budget appropriations to 2015 amounting to EUR 16 310 467**. The EUSF contribution was paid out on 7 April 2015.
- **Cyclone Bejisa (La Réunion):** the French authorities estimated total direct damage at EUR 114.800 million. On 27 August 2014, the Commission decided to **reject the application**, as it could not be considered to be extraordinary within the meaning of the Regulation.
- **Earthquakes at Kefalonia (Greece):** the Greek authorities estimated the total direct damage at EUR 147.333 million. The Commission came to the conclusion that this disaster did qualify as an extraordinary regional disaster, meeting the criteria, and proposed the mobilisation of the Fund. The financial contribution amounting to **EUR 3 683 320** was paid out on 8 April 2015.
- **Ice storm (Slovenia):** the Slovene authorities estimated the total direct damage caused by the ice disaster at EUR 428.734 million. The disaster qualified as a "major natural disaster" and the Commission accepted the application from Slovenia. The financial contribution amounting to **EUR 18 388 478** was paid out on 8 April 2015.
- **Ice and floods (Croatia):** the Croatian authorities estimated the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 291.905 million. The Commission accepted the application since the latter qualified as a "major natural disaster". The financial contribution amounting to **EUR 8 616 263** was paid out on 8 April 2015.
- **Extreme winter conditions (Romania):** the Romanian authorities estimated the total direct damage at EUR 327.897 million. This amount, however, contained a significant share of indirect damage, which was excluded from the estimated total direct damage. The Commission came to the conclusion that the application from Romania could not be considered to be extraordinary within the meaning of the Regulation and **rejected the application** on 27 August 2014.
- **Flooding (Serbia):** the Serbian authorities estimated the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 1 106 million. The disaster qualified as a "major natural disaster" and the Commission accepted the application from Serbia. The financial contribution amounting to **EUR 60 224 605** was paid out on 14 April 2015.

- **Flooding (Croatia):** the Croatian authorities estimated the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 297,629 million. Like the disaster in Serbia, the disaster in Croatia qualified as a “major natural disaster”. The Commission proposed the mobilisation of the Fund. The financial contribution amounting to **EUR 8 959 725** was paid out on 8 April 2015.
- **Spring flooding (Bulgaria):** the accepted estimated total direct damage caused by the disaster amounted to **EUR 311.328 million**. The disaster qualified as a “major natural disaster” and the Commission decided to mobilise the Fund. The financial contribution amounting to **EUR 10 542 110** was paid out on 8 April 2015.

Other applications: the report indicates that assessments of the four applications received in 2014 from Romania (spring and summer flooding), from Bulgaria (summer flooding) and from Italy (autumn flooding) could only be completed in 2015 and will be reported in more detail in the 2015 annual report.

Amending Regulation: Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund entered into force on 28 June 2014. The main amendments were as follows:

- a clear definition of the area of intervention limiting it to natural disasters only with a new provision on drought;
- the extension of the application deadline from 10 to 12 weeks;
- the extension of the implementation period from 12 to 18 months ;
- clear rules for regional disasters with direct damage exceeding 1.5% of regional GDP (at NUTS2 level). For outermost regions the threshold is 1% of regional GDP.

As of 2015, Member States now have the possibility of requesting an advance payment of 10% of the likely amount of aid (capped at EUR 30 million).

New provisions were introduced focusing on the implementation of EU legislation on risk prevention and management.