

Specific measures for additional assistance to Member States affected by natural disasters

2016/0384(COD) - 30/11/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend [Regulation \(EU\) No 1303/2013](#) as regards specific measures to provide additional assistance to Member States affected by natural disaster.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the recent earthquakes in Italy have had a devastating effect on the people living in the region. Large scale reconstruction works will be required, notably to restore the cultural heritage of the affected areas.

Europe needs to be able to quickly provide additional, effective support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to Member States and regions hit by major or regional natural disasters, complementing the means available under the European Union Solidarity Fund.

In order to provide such additional assistance to Member States affected by natural disasters, the Commission proposes to introduce the possibility of a **separate priority axis for reconstruction operations supported by the ERDF** within an operational programme.

CONTENT: it is proposed to introduce an additional paragraph in Article 120 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 to provide for the creation of a separate priority axis with a **co-financing rate of up to 100%** to support, under ERDF investment priorities, operations selected by managing authorities in response to major or regional disasters.

The operations that may be cofinanced under this separate priority axis are those linked to reconstruction in response to major or regional natural disasters as defined in [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 2012/2002](#) establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund.

Starting date of eligibility of expenditure: for operations under this separate priority axis, a **derogation** to the rule concerning the starting date of eligibility of expenditure as a result of an amendment of a programme is proposed. This would ensure that following the amendment of the programme expenditure incurred as from the date of the disaster can be declared for reimbursement.

Covering expenses: a provision has also been included to cover the case of expenditure declared for measures taken by Member State authorities **directly after the disaster occurred**, and before the operational programme is amended, and reimbursed at the existing co-financing rate.

The higher co-financing rate would then be applied through the necessary adjustments to the next payment application and, where appropriate, to the next accounts, **once the programme has been amended to include the separate priority axis**.

Reporting arrangements: the implementation of the measure will be monitored and reported upon in the framework of the general reporting mechanisms established in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the proposed modification does not imply any changes in the Multiannual Financial Framework annual ceilings for commitments and payments as per Annex I of Regulation (EU) No 1311/2013.

It remains within the limits of the overall allocation for the period 2014-2020 and is **therefore budgetary neutral**. The increased co-financing rate up to 100% will lead to a partial frontloading of payments, followed by lower payments at a later stage as the overall envelope is unchanged.