Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Romania, Italy and Austria

2019/2023(BUD) - 22/05/2019 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to mobilise the European Union Solidarity Fund to assist Romania, Italy and Austria.

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

CONTENT: the proposed Decision covers the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) for an amount of **EUR 293 551 794** to provide assistance to Romania, Italy and Austria further to disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2018.

The Fund aims to enable the Union to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to emergency situations in order to show solidarity with the population of regions struck by natural disasters. The Fund is not to exceed a maximum annual amount of EUR 500 million (2011 prices), as laid down in Article 10 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 (MFF regulation).

Romania - flooding in the North East region in summer 2018

On 7 September 2018, Romania submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following repeated torrential rain that caused widespread flooding, causing extensive damage to infrastructure and households as well as agricultural losses.

After an initial claim for a total estimated direct damage of EUR 196.8 million, the Romanian authorities submitted a revised application on 9 October 2018, in which the total direct damage amounted to EUR 327.7 million. This amount represents 2.07% of regional GDP and therefore exceeds the required threshold of 1.5% of regional GDP (EUR 238 million in the case of the North-East region).

The Romanian authorities have estimated the cost of eligible emergency and recovery operations at EUR 294 million and have broken it down by type of action. The affected region is part of the ‘less developed regions' under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) for 2014-2020.

Italy - extreme weather events in autumn 2018

On 20 December 2018, Italy submitted an application to the Fund following floods and landslides resulting from the torrential rain from the northern alpine areas to Sicily, causing a large number of victims (34 reported dead and 1 person was reported missing) and widespread material damage.

The application was presented on the basis of the criteria for a ‘major natural disaster'. The Italian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 6.6 billion (updated amount). This amount represents more than 192% of the threshold applicable to Italy of EUR 3.4 billion.

Italy has estimated the cost of eligible emergency and recovery operations at more than EUR 1 700 million and has broken it down by type of action. Three of the affected regions are considered as ‘less developed regions’ under the ESI Funds 2014-2020 (Calabria, Campania and Sicily), two as ‘regions in transition’ (Abruzzo and Sardinia), while the other nine regions are ‘more developed regions’.

Austria - extreme weather events in autumn 2018

On 14 January 2019, Austria submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following extreme weather events. Weather events in Italy also affected a number of alpine/southern regions of Austria, in particular Carinthia and East Tyrol.

The Austrian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 326.2 million. The request was made under the so-called ‘neighbouring country provision’ whereby an eligible country affected by the same disaster qualifying as a major disaster in a neighbouring eligible country may also benefit from Solidarity Fund aid.

Austria estimated the cost of emergency and recovery operations at EUR 214.5 million and presented it broken down by type of operation. The affected regions are "more developed regions" under the ESI Funds (2014-2020).

Conclusion

The Commission considers that the applications of Romania, Italy and Austria fulfil the conditions for a financial contribution from the Fund as set out in Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002. It therefore proposes to mobilise the EUSF within the framework of the general budget of the Union for the 2019 financial year, in order to grant:

- an amount of EUR 8 192 300 to Romania;

- an amount of EUR 277 204 595 to Italy;

- an amount of EUR 8 154 899 to Austria.

This mobilisation is accompanied by Draft amending budget (DAB) No 3/2019, which proposes to enter the necessary appropriations in the general budget 2019, both in commitments and payments.