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

2020/2068(BUD) - 30/04/2020 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to mobilise the European Union Solidarity Fund to assist Portugal, Spain, 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 278 993 814 to provide assistance to Portugal, Spain, Italy and Austria further to disasters that took place in these countries during 2019.

The Fund enables 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).

Portugal - Hurricane Lorenzo in the Azores in October 2019

On 8 November 2019, Portugal submitted an application to mobilise the Fund, following extreme weather events in the Azores. Hurricane Lorenzo passed through the Azores on 2 October 2019, causing severe damage to public and private infrastructures and impacted on the daily lives of people, businesses and institutions. The Portuguese authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 328.5 million. The country estimated the cost of emergency and recovery operations at EUR 279.3 million. The overwhelming part of eligible costs (almost EUR 270 million) concerns costs for the restoration of transport infrastructure, in particular harbours.

Spain - Flooding in the regions of Valencia, Murcia, Castilla-La Mancha and Andalucia in September 2019

On 28 November 2019, Spain submitted an application to mobilise the Fund, following extreme rainfall resulting in flooding in the regions of Valencia, Murcia, Castilla-La Mancha and Andalusia. The extreme amount of rainfall exceeded the records of the past 140 years and led to severe flooding which cost the lives of 8 persons. Roads, railway and airport infrastructure was damaged and services had to be suspended. Erosion caused damage to the water networks, protective infrastructure and the environment. The Spanish authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 2 269.7 million. They estimated the cost of emergency and recovery operations at EUR 650.6 million. The largest share of eligible costs (over EUR 385 million) concerns costs for cleaning up operations. The second largest share concerns the repair of infrastructure amounting to EUR 247 million.

Italy - Extreme weather events in the autumn of 2019

On 10 January 2020, Italy submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following extreme weather events in 17 regions in the autumn of 2019. A series of connected extreme weather events affected most of the Italian territory from north to south causing severe damage from flooding and landslides and culminating in the flooding of Venice. The Italian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by

the disaster at EUR 5 619.878 million (updated amount). Italy estimated the cost of emergency and recovery operations at over EUR 1 110.1 million. The largest share of eligible costs (over EUR 479 million) concerns expenditure for restoring preventive infrastructure and the protection of the cultural heritage. The second largest share concerns costs for the restauration of essential infrastructure (EUR 465 million).

Austria - Extreme weather events in November 2019

On 29 January 2020, Austria submitted application to mobilise the Fund following extreme weather events in November 2019. By far the largest damage was caused in the southernmost Austrian Land Carinthia and in the adjacent province of Eastern Tyrol, both Alpine areas bordering on Italy. Heavy rain and snowfall lead to flooding of numerous watercourses causing damage mostly to transport infrastructure and closure of roads. A number of bridges were severely damaged. The Austrian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 93.2 million. Austria estimated the cost of emergency and recovery operations at EUR 61.3 million. The largest share (over EUR 40 million) of eligible costs concerns costs for the recovery of damage to the transport network. Measures against soil erosion account for some EUR 13 million.

Conclusion

The Commission considers that the applications of Portugal, Spain, 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 2020 financial year, in order to grant:

- the amount of EUR 8 212 697 to Portugal;
- the amount of EUR 56 743 358 to Spain;
- the amount of EUR 211 707 982 to Italy;
- the amount of EUR 2 329 777 to Austria.

This mobilisation is accompanied by Draft amending budget (DAB) No 4/2020, which proposes to enter the necessary appropriations in the general budget 2020, both in commitments and payments.