Resolution on mitigating the consequences of earthquakes in Croatia

2021/2504(RSP) - 21/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 677 votes to 5, with 1 abstention, a resolution on mitigating the consequences of earthquakes in Croatia.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR and the Left groups.

As a reminder, in 2020 Croatia was hit by devasting earthquakes which caused extensive damage to the country. To help the country deal with the devastating effects of that earthquake, Parliament made EUR 683.7 million available from the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF). Moreover, through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, 15 countries lent their support to this emergency.

Parliament stressed its deepest solidarity and sympathies with all those affected by the earthquakes and welcomed the Member States' overall solidarity. It underlined the seriousness of the situation on the ground, which is putting considerable and intense financial pressure on the national, regional and local public authorities in Croatia and may lead to irreversible population decline in the affected areas, with the people affected facing devastating social and economic consequences and extreme psychological and social pressures.

Stressing that in cases of severe earthquakes, such as those recently witnessed in Croatia, mitigating the consequences takes considerable time, which should be taken into account when it comes to a future revision of the EUSF to ensure that there is sufficient absorption time for funding beyond the current application deadlines.

Members stressed the importance, moreover, of strengthening EUSF spending not only for damage repair, but also for resilience in relation to climate change, natural disasters and public health emergencies in order to emerge stronger from disasters.

The Commission and the Croatian authorities are called on to:

- identify all possible ways to provide immediate help and support in ensuring decent and safe living conditions for the many people, giving priority to the most vulnerable, who have been deprived of their homes and still lack safe accommodation, at least in the form of containers, which could provide a minimum degree of shelter during the harsh winter conditions over the coming months;

- devise a swift way of distributing the necessary financial and other assistance to ensure a speedy recovery of the affected areas, to make all possible financial means available to help Croatia oversee a rapid recovery and provide assistance to all those in need, and to minimise the administrative burden in accessing help and support for people on the ground.

The Croatian authorities should:

- closely monitor the reconstruction activities and to ensure that they comply with requirements for earthquake-resistant buildings and infrastructure and apply best professional practices and expertise from other Member States;

- prioritise renovation in its recovery and resilience plan, devoting particular attention to comprehensive preventative renovations that ensure the highest seismic standards for housing and buildings at greatest risk in its most earthquake-prone regions;

- prioritise residents of the affected areas for COVID-19 vaccination to immediately protect the health of all residents, helpers and workers on the ground.