

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Greece and France in relation to natural disasters and to Albania, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain in relation to a public health emergency

2021/0077(BUD) - 18/05/2021 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted by 669 votes to 7, with 17 abstentions, a resolution approving the European Parliament and Council decision to mobilise the European Union Solidarity Fund to help Greece and France in relation to natural disasters, as well as Albania, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Spain in relation to a public health emergency.

The European Union Solidarity 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 major or regional natural disasters or a major public health emergency. Members stated that the maximum amount available under the Fund at this stage in 2021 is EUR 525 525 348, which is sufficient to cover the needs under the proposed decision.

Natural disasters in Greece and France

As part of the EU's general budget for the 2021 financial year, the following amounts, in commitment and payment appropriations, are mobilised under the European Union Solidarity Fund in connection with natural disasters:

- EUR 3 300 100 shall be provided to Greece in relation to the floods in Sterea Ellada, including the amount of EUR 330 010 as advance payment;
- EUR 21 588 519 shall be provided to Greece in relation to cyclone Ianos, including the amount of EUR 2 158 852 as advance payment;
- EUR 2 531 301 shall be provided to Greece in relation to the earthquake in the islands of Samos, Chios and Ikaria, including the amount of EUR 253 131 as advance payment;
- EUR 59 325 000 shall be provided to France in relation to the storm Alex, including the amount of EUR 5 932 500 as advance payment.

COVID-19 related applications

The following amounts in commitment and payment appropriations should be mobilised under the European Union Solidarity Fund in relation to a major public health emergency:

- EUR 905 271 for Albania;
- EUR 31 755 580 for Austria;
- EUR 37 298 777 to Belgium;
- EUR 17 373 205 to the Czech Republic;
- EUR 3 588 755 to Estonia;
- EUR 91 365 053 to France;
- EUR 13 648 386 to Germany;
- EUR 3 994 022 to Greece;
- EUR 13 136 857 to Hungary;
- EUR 20 480 330 to Ireland;
- EUR 76 271 930 to Italy;
- EUR 1 177 677 to Latvia;
- EUR 2 828 291 to Lithuania;
- EUR 2 857 025 to Luxembourg;
- EUR 199 505 to Montenegro;
- EUR 18 039 670 to Portugal;
- EUR 13 926 870 to Romania;
- EUR 11 968 276 to Serbia;
- EUR 36 639 441 for Spain.

Members stressed the urgency of mobilising financial assistance, regretting that it had taken a considerable amount of time to assess applications for financial assistance due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Recalling that the Fund is only a curative instrument, the resolution stressed the need for a preventive policy in the future to tackle climate change, in line with the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal. For particularly vulnerable regions, investments should be made in climate change mitigation and adaptation and effective synergies should be ensured between the Fund and the relevant EU funding programmes.