Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021

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PURPOSE: to mobilise the European Union solidarity fund to assist Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece following natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021.

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

CONTENT: 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 major public health emergency.

This proposed decision covers the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) for an amount of **EUR 718 482 761** to provide assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece following natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021.

Between 12 and 15 July 2021, a slow-moving low-pressure system named ‘Bernd’ passed over Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Austria causing heavy rainfall and flooding. Whereas, Spain was hit by a volcanic eruption on the Island of La Palma and Crete, Greece, was hit by an earthquake, both causing substantial damage.

Severe flooding

In October 2021, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Luxembourg respectively submitted applications for estimated total direct damage of:

- EUR 29.21 billion;

- EUR 5.56 billion;

- EUR 500 million;

- EUR 84.6 million;

- EUR 193.3 million.

Volcanic eruption and earthquake

For Spain and Greece, they submitted respective applications for an estimated total direct damage of:

- EUR 1 billion (the Commission awarded an advance of EUR 5 391 796);

- EUR 143.42 million (the Commission awarded an advance of EUR 896 375 to Greece).

Conclusion

The Commission considers that the applications of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece 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 2021 financial year, in order to grant the amount of:

- EUR 612 611 256 to Germany in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 87 737 427 to Belgium in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 4 713 027 to the Netherlands in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 797 520 to Austria in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 1 822 056 to Luxembourg in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 9 449 589 to Spain in relation to the volcano eruption in La Palma;

- EUR 1 351 886 to Greece in relation to the earthquake in Crete.

This mobilisation is accompanied by DEC No 20/2022 that proposes to transfer the amount of EUR 668 482 761 from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) reserve line to the EUSF operational budget line, both in commitments and payments.

In addition to the transferred appropriations from the SEAR reserve line, this mobilisation will be financed through the use of the amount of EUR 50 million in commitment and payment appropriations already inscribed in the General Budget 2022 in accordance with the EUSF Regulation for covering advances. The already paid advances to Spain and Greece of the total amount of EUR 6 288 171 will be deducted before the payment of the balance.