

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Greece and France relating to six natural disasters occurred in 2023

2024/0212(BUD) - 08/10/2024 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted by 632 votes to 7, with 3 abstentions, a resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund to provide assistance to Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Greece and France relating to six natural disasters occurred in 2023.

Parliament approved the decision to mobilise the following amounts in commitment and payment appropriations for the European Union Solidarity Fund in connection with natural disasters under the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024:

The European Union Solidarity Fund will be mobilised as follows in commitment and payment appropriations in relation to natural disasters:

- **EUR 378 833 540** will be provided to Italy in relation to floods in the Emilia-Romagna Region in May 2023;
- **EUR 428 405 059** will be provided to Slovenia in relation to floods in August 2023;
- **EUR 5 199 245** will be provided to Austria in relation to floods in August 2023;
- **EUR 101 528 949** will be provided to Greece in relation to floods in September 2023;
- **EUR 67 811 826** will be provided to Italy in relation to floods in the Tuscany Region in October and November 2023;
- **EUR 46 763 069** will be provided to France in relation to floods in the former Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region in November 2023.

Parliament welcomed the decision as a tangible and visible form of the Union's solidarity with its citizens and the regions in the affected areas in Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Greece and France. It reiterated the importance of **communicating to the public** the tangible benefits brought about by the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF), also to further increase citizens' awareness of Union tools and programmes.

Highlighting the increasing number of severe and destructive natural disasters in Europe, Parliament considered that the budget of the EUSF or its equivalent should be expanded in view of the upcoming Commission proposal on the new Multiannual Financial Framework and subsequent inter-institutional negotiations.

The Commission is urged to increase the budget of the European Solidarity Reserve and to make sure that the overall amount of funding and the allocation modalities ensure the optimal effectiveness of the EUSF.

In particular, islands and coastal regions should receive adequate funding within the framework of the EUSF to address their specific vulnerabilities.

Parliament stressed that the EUSF is only a curative instrument and that the Union should also continue to **address climate change adaptation and mitigation** by supporting European and national policies to prevent natural disasters. Member States and the Commission are called on to deliver their contribution to achieve the objectives agreed at the Paris Climate Summit.

The resolution insisted on the need to:

- create **effective synergies** with other Union policies and programmes and for Member States to make best use of funding opportunities in particular, of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund +, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Rural development programmes;

- put in place **preventive measures**, not only to mitigate future damage but also to prevent the exacerbation of risk conditions following catastrophic events, such as wildfires, landslides or the drying up of lakes and rivers.

Assistance provided under the EUSF should not be to the detriment of European funding received by Member States under other Union programmes or policies.

Recalling the importance of **rapid and solid damage assessment**, Parliament called for increased operational efforts to be made in order to reduce the average time for the release of advanced payments, while ensuring the Union budget is protected. It called on the Commission to further streamline the procedure and shorten the time required for the processing of the applications for the mobilisation of the EUSF, to accelerate response times and ensure that funds reach the affected regions.