European Union Solidarity Fund: mobilisation for disasters since August 2002

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PURPOSE : to mobilise the EU Solidarity Fund according to point 3 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 7 November 2002 (refer to procedure reference ACI/2002/2216). CONTENT : following the disastrous floods which occurred in August and September 2002 in some Member States and candidate countries whose accession to the European Union is currently under negotiation, the European Union has decided to create a European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) to face disasters. The Interinstitutional Agreement of 7 November 2002 allows for the mobilisation of the Fund through a flexibility mechanism, with the annual ceiling of EUR 1 billion, over and above the relevant headings of the financial perspective. The conditions of eligibility to the Fund are detailed in the Council Regulation establishing the EUSF (refer to CNS/2002 /0228), which notably contains a specific provision whereby the Fund may retroactively be mobilised for disasters since August this year. On the basis of informal applications to the EUSF by the countries which were affected by the floods in August and September of this year, total estimates of the damage caused are as follows : Germany - EUR 9 151 million; Austria - EUR 2 939 million; Czech Republic - EUR 2 341 million; France - EUR 834.5 million. In light of the above, and considering the maximum possible grant from the Fund as well as the scope for reallocating appropriations under the headings requiring additional expenditure, the Commission proposes to mobilise the EU Solidarity Fund for a total amount of EUR 728 million, to be allocated under headings 3 and 7 of the financial perspective. The Commission will present a supplementary and amending budget (SAB) in order to enter in ten 2002 budget specific commitment appropriations, broken down by beneficiary country, as requested in Point 4 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 7 November 2002 (refer to BUD/2002/2238).