

European Union Solidarity Fund

2002/0228(CNS) - 11/11/2002 - Final act

PURPOSE : to establish a European Union Solidarity Fund ('the Fund') to enable the Community to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to emergency situations. **COMMUNITY MEASURE :** Council Regulation 2012/2002/EC establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund. **CONTENT :** At the request of a beneficiary State, assistance from the Fund may be mainly mobilised when a major natural disaster with serious repercussions on living conditions, the natural environment or the economy occurs in the State. The definition of a "major disaster" is one resulting in damage estimated at over EUR 3 billion in 2002 prices, or more than 0.6% of the GNI of the State. In exceptional circumstances where a particular disaster does not meet the minimum scale required, assistance may be granted where a region is affected by an extraordinary disaster. Total annual assistance will be limited to no more than 7.5% of the annual amount available to the Fund. Particular focus will be on remote regions. The aim of the Fund is to complement the efforts of the State concerned and to cover a share of their public expenditure in order to help the beneficiary State to carry out the following essential emergency operations, depending on the type of disaster: -immediate restoration to working order of infrastructure and plant in the fields of energy, water and waste water, telecommunications, transport, health and education; -providing temporary accommodation and funding rescue services to meet the immediate needs of the population concerned; - immediate securing of preventive infrastructures and measures of immediate protection of the cultural heritage; -immediate cleaning up of disaster-stricken areas, including natural zones. Payments from the Fund are limited to financing measures alleviating non-insurable damages and will be recovered if a third party subsequently meets the cost of repairing the damage. No later than 10 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster, a State may submit an application, and the Commission will determine if the prescribed conditions for mobilising the Fund are met. Notwithstanding this deadline, provision is made for countries which have been affected by disasters from 1 August 2002, to request assistance from the Fund within 2 months of entry into force of this Regulation. On 1 October each year, at least one-quarter of the annual amount should remain available to cover needs arising until the end of the year. The Regulation specifies that damage repaired under Community or international instruments relating to the compensation of specific damages will not, for the same purpose, benefit from assistance from the Fund. A grant must be disbursed within one year of the date on which the Commission has disbursed it. If part of it is unused by that deadline, it will be recovered by the Commission. No later than six months after the expiry of the one-year period, the beneficiary State must present a report on disbursement of the grant. This report will, amongst other things, detail the preventive measures proposed by the beneficiary State in order to limit damage and avoid a recurrence of similar disasters. The Council must review this Regulation by 31 December 2006. **ENTRY INTO FORCE :** 15/11/02.