

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001821/24
to the Commission
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(25 September 2024)

Subject: Flooding in Central and Eastern Europe

Central and Eastern Europe is being battered by floods. Many Europeans have lost their lives and their possessions. The discussion on the reconstruction of flooded areas and the provision of support for those affected will be of the utmost importance. However, preventive measures and safety principles should be just as high on the agenda. Our country, Poland, was shocked by the information provided at the last part-session in Strasbourg concerning the monitoring of this disaster and the warnings, which were made as early as 9 September. Meanwhile, the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, reassured the public on 13 September that the weather forecasts were ‘not overly alarming’.

In light of the above:

1. At what level has the Emergency Response Coordination Centre been cooperating with the Commission, and what has this cooperation with countries at risk of flooding, particularly Poland, consisted of?
2. When was the Commission notified of the risk of flooding in Central and Eastern Europe?
3. What measures could the Commission take to help minimise the damage caused by such disasters?

Submitted: 25.9.2024

Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(8 January 2025)

The Commission’s Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) ⁽¹⁾, amongst others, daily monitors the forecast estimates for potential flooding through the Copernicus European Flood Awareness System (EFAS) ⁽²⁾. EFAS complements the national systems. The Commission has a supporting role in this field.

From the onset, the ERCC was in contact with the national civil protection authorities of Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia to raise awareness about possible upcoming floods and offered support through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) ⁽³⁾. On 18 September 2024, Poland activated the UCPM and requested support to strengthen its response to the floods. The EU’s strategic reserve, rescEU ⁽⁴⁾, was also mobilised to complete Member States’ offers for assistance.

As of 13 September 2024, Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania activated the Copernicus Rapid Mapping for flood delineation and damage assessment ⁽⁵⁾.

The Commission attaches particular importance to disaster prevention and preparedness, including by co-financing projects under the UCPM ⁽⁶⁾ and cooperating with Member States to implement the Floods Directive ⁽⁷⁾.

The Cohesion policy is contributing to climate change adaptation and disaster risk management with EUR 14 billion across EU regions. Furthermore, the Commission adopted on 21 October 2024 its proposal RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction ⁽⁸⁾ to provide liquidity and ease budgetary pressure in response to both recent and future natural disasters in the concerned Member States.

⁽¹⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en

⁽²⁾ <https://european-flood.emergency.copernicus.eu/en>

⁽³⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/resceu_en

⁽⁵⁾ <https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/node/157182>

⁽⁶⁾ Grants for UCPM prevention and preparedness actions are awarded through the ‘Technical assistance for disaster risk management’ and ‘Knowledge for action in prevention and preparedness’ grants.

⁽⁷⁾ Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27-34.

⁽⁸⁾ Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057, COM(2024) 496 final.