

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001932/24
to the Commission
Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR)
(3 October 2024)**

Subject: Cohesion funding earmarked for wealthier EU countries

In response to the catastrophic flooding in Central Europe, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that countries hit by the disaster would receive EUR 10 billion from the EU Cohesion Fund.

Regulation 2021/1058 specifies that the Cohesion Fund is intended to level the playing field in the common market for the less prosperous Member States. In the 2021-2027 programming period, its beneficiaries are countries whose gross national income per capita is below 90% of the EU average.

Austria, which in principle is not a beneficiary under the current programming framework, is one of the Central European countries impacted by the flooding that will receive financial aid from the Cohesion Fund.

In view of the above, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Has allocating cohesion funding to Austria reduced the amounts which the less wealthy countries are entitled to receive from the Cohesion Fund?
2. What will be the mechanism and the scale of the reallocation of funding under the Cohesion Fund in the 2021-2027 programming period?
3. Is the Commission aware that allocating cohesion funding to Austria will mean that changes will need to be made to investments being carried out and planned by eligible Member States?

Submitted: 3.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(17 December 2024)**

The Commission adopted on 21 October 2024 its proposal RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction ⁽¹⁾. It proposes to facilitate the mobilisation of EU Cohesion Policy funds in support of post-disaster recovery.

The Commission proposed at the same time an amendment to the regulation of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) as part of the 2014-2022 framework ⁽²⁾.

The proposal does not have an impact on the already established allocations of Member States and does not take away resources from any Member State. Austria is not eligible for the Cohesion Fund and will not receive financial support from this Fund.

The proposal provides Member States with flexibilities in the use of their Cohesion Policy resources ⁽³⁾ for reconstruction and repair measures responding to natural disasters, notably through the possibility of 100% of EU financing and 30% of pre-financing.

The proposal does not include the possibility that the Cohesion Fund is mobilised by Member States to support reconstruction, repair and support measures in response to natural disasters.

However, Member States have the possibility to transfer resources among Cohesion Policy funds within the limits laid down in the Common Provisions Regulation ⁽⁴⁾.

The regulation is currently being discussed by the co-legislators. Under the Commission's proposal, once the regulation is adopted by the co-legislators and enters into force, Member States wishing to make use of the flexibilities proposed in response to a natural disaster which has occurred since 1 January 2024 will have to submit to the Commission the proposed amendments to the Programmes concerned.

⁽¹⁾ This is a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) — COM(2024) 496 final.

⁽²⁾ Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2020/2220 as regards specific measures under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to provide additional assistance to Member States affected by natural disasters — COM(2024) 495 final.

⁽³⁾ Namely, under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Cohesion Fund.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.