

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001992/24
to the Commission**

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(8 October 2024)

Subject: Mitigating climate change impact by strengthening EU solidarity mechanisms

The devastating floods that affected Slovenia in August 2023, as well as the more recent flooding across Austria, Poland and other European countries, have illustrated the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters across Europe. While the EU's solidarity mechanisms, including the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF), have provided vital assistance in response to such events, the scale of these crises across Europe demands a comprehensive review of existing frameworks to ensure faster and more effective responses, as well as better preparedness.

The Slovenian example proves that the aid provided is indeed insufficient for recovery as the total estimate of the direct damage is approximately EUR 9.9 billion, while EU aid amounts to less than 5% of that sum.

1. Are there any plans to increase funding or flexibility within the EUSF or related instruments to ensure rapid and adequate responses to larger-scale or more frequent climate-related disasters such as floods, fires and droughts? Could improvements be made to streamline cross-border cooperation, resource sharing, and coordination between Member States in disaster preparedness and response?
2. What measures or climate adaptation initiatives has the Commission put into its disaster response frameworks to reduce future risks and improve resilience at both national and EU levels?

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

1. The Commission has consistently pointed to the fact that the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) is underfunded to address the increasing number of climate related disasters. This is why it proposed its substantial reinforcement in the mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework ⁽¹⁾. The budgetary authority decided to increase the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve by EUR 1.5 billion for the years 2024-2027. The EUSF ⁽²⁾ now has an annual budget of EUR 1 016 million ⁽³⁾ (in 2018 prices).

Given the need to complement this support in post-disaster situations, the Commission adopted proposals on 21 October 2024 to enable the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to provide liquidity to ease the budgetary pressure in response to natural disasters ⁽⁴⁾.

To support cooperation, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism is currently financing ten dedicated disaster Prevention and Preparedness cross-border projects ⁽⁵⁾ to increase interoperability and coordination among Member States. In addition, early warning systems are shared with Member States and the Emergency Coordination Response Centre facilitated any request for assistance.

2. Under the 2021-2027 period, Cohesion Policy is contributing with EUR 14 billion to promote climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, on the basis of ecosystem-based approaches. Cohesion Policy funding can cover prevention and preparedness measures, prioritising nature-based solutions. Moreover, in this current period, the application of the 'do no significant harm' principle and climate proofing contribute to a 'build back better' approach and to enhance the resilience of EU-funded infrastructure.

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765 of 29 February 2024 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3) as amended by Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 May 2014 (OJ L 189, 27.6.2014, p. 143) and by Regulation (EU) 2020/461 of the European Parliament and the Council of 30 March 2020 (OJ L 99, 31.3.2020, p. 9). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32002R2012>

⁽³⁾ EUR 1 144.1 million in 2024 prices.

⁽⁴⁾ RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057; COM (2024) 496 final.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/projects/preparedness-in-civil-protection-and-marine-pollution>