

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002480/24
to the Commission
Elena Nevado del Campo (PPE)
(8 November 2024)**

Subject: Financial aid for rebuilding towns and cities in Spain affected by the recent torrential rainstorms

Several parts of Spain, particularly a number of areas in Valencia, have been enduring a tragedy that has resulted in hundreds of deaths and many missing persons. In addition, thousands of people have lost their homes and their way of life and still cannot meet their most basic needs. In view of this crisis, the EU institutions need to provide as much support as possible in solidarity with the victims.

1. What instruments and funds has the Commission already planned to mobilise to take immediate action in the affected areas?
2. Has the Commission received a request from the Spanish Government to activate the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and gain access to available funding from the EU Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve?
3. When is the proposal for more flexibility in using cohesion policy funds expected to be approved to better deal with emergencies and natural disasters?

Submitted: 8.11.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(15 January 2025)**

On 8 November 2024, Spain requested assistance ⁽¹⁾ via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Several Member States expressed their solidarity and intention to support Spain and responded accordingly ⁽²⁾.

The Commission deployed two liaison officers to Spain to help coordinate the assistance coming from offering Member States. The EU Copernicus satellite mapping system has also been proactively activated.

The Spanish authorities informed the Commission about their intention to apply for the EU Solidarity Fund ⁽³⁾, where the application will be submitted following proper damage assessment, within the 12-week regulatory deadline; and the Recovery and Resilience Facility funds, where technical exchanges are ongoing to finalise the application.

The Commission adopted on 21 October a proposal RESTORE ⁽⁴⁾. It was agreed by the co-legislators and entered into force on 24 December 2024 ⁽⁵⁾.

Member States will have six months starting from the entry into force, to submit programme changes to the Commission and will receive subsequently additional pre-financing and reimbursement of expenditure with a Union financing of up to 95%.

It will be up to programme authorities to make use of the support and flexibilities provided. Under the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans ⁽⁶⁾, Member States may programme investments in the restoration of agricultural and forestry potential.

A new specific measure was also put forward under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ⁽⁷⁾ to provide additional assistance to farmers, forest holders and small and medium-sized enterprises affected by natural disasters which can be implemented through the Rural Development Programmes.

Other EU funding instruments, such as the Agricultural Reserve, may also provide support under certain conditions.

⁽¹⁾ This request consisted of water, sanitation, hygiene items, heavy machinery including pumps and vehicles, and expertise.

⁽²⁾ This includes Belgium, France, Lithuania, Portugal, and Romania by 21 November 2024.

⁽³⁾ 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>

⁽⁴⁾ RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction is a Commission's 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+), published on 21 October 2024.

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/3236 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1057 and (EU) 2021/1058 as regards Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction (RESTORE) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3236/oj/eng>

⁽⁶⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013, OJ L 435/1, 6.12.2021.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2024%3A495%3AFIN>