

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002728/24
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(3 December 2024)**

Subject: Providing support and repairing damages in relation to extreme weather events

Every day, we see different EU countries facing extreme weather events and the effects thereof.

Storm Bora has caused loss of life and major destruction in several parts of Greece.

In particular, the island of Rhodes and several municipal units on the island of Lemnos were placed in a month-long state of emergency due to flooding caused by the storm ⁽¹⁾.

Although existing European resources ⁽²⁾ have been bolstered ⁽³⁾, they are insufficient, given that just last October, a support package worth more than EUR 1 billion was adopted to support recovery efforts in five countries following the severe floods of 2023.

In view of the above:

1. What will the Commission do to ensure that the EU's financial tools are commensurate with the disasters it is facing, as well as to increase their effectiveness and flexibility so that they can be mobilised quickly to support disaster recovery?
2. What steps will the Commission take to support the repair of infrastructure and networks and the recovery of the affected regions?

Submitted: 3.12.2024

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

The European Commission, through Cohesion Policy funds ⁽¹⁾ is already contributing to disaster risk management with EUR 14 billion across EU regions, focusing on the most vulnerable and exposed territories.

For Greece, some EUR 1.4 billion is allocated to prevent and manage climate-related risks ⁽²⁾ in the programming period 2021-2027.

Under the shared management and subsidiarity principles governing the Cohesion Policy Funds, the use of the available resources (project selection and implementation of operations) falls under the responsibility of the Member State.

Member States affected by natural disasters may also benefit from the flexibilities provided by the Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction — RESTORE Regulation which entered into force on 24 December 2024 ⁽³⁾.

This will enable Member States to reprogramme part of their Cohesion Policy funds allocations for actions and projects in response to natural disasters, including reconstruction and repair measures to alleviate the negative socioeconomic consequences of natural disasters.

Union support could cover up to 95% of the expenditure and include an additional pre-financing of 25%. This will ease the budgetary pressure on affected Member States and regions.

Finally, the EU Solidarity Fund, upon request, is available to support Member States targeting costs for emergency and recovery operations ⁽⁴⁾ caused by major natural disasters.

¹ ¹State of emergency in Rhodes and Lemnos — shocking images of the devastation caused by the storm <https://www.iefimerida.gr/ellada/se-katastasi-ektaktis-anagkis-kirythiike-i-rodos>.

² ²Solidarity Fund and Emergency Aid Reserve

³ ³In 2024 prices, the annual allocation for the EUSF amounts to EUR 1.14 billion.

⁽¹⁾ ⁽¹⁾ European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, Just Transition Fund and Interreg programmes

⁽²⁾ ⁽²⁾ Out of the EUR 1.4 billion, some EUR 726 million in public funding is allocated to prevent and manage climate-related flood risks.

⁽³⁾ ⁽³⁾ 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), available at the following link : <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3236/oj>

⁽⁴⁾ ⁽⁴⁾ The EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) can only be activated at the request of the Member State which has a deadline of 12 weeks as from when the first damage occurred, demonstrating that the total direct damage exceeds the thresholds specified in Article 2 Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002. The EUSF may cover a part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities. This means, for example, the recovery of essential infrastructure, provision of temporary accommodation to the population, cleaning-up operations, and protection of the cultural heritage. Private damage is not eligible.