

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000364/25
to the Commission
Georgios Aftias (PPE)
(28 January 2025)

Subject: Funding for the water supply of the Municipality of Volos, which was affected by the natural disasters

Thessaly — and especially Magnesia — has been hit by the recent natural disasters, resulting in a major water supply problem in the region.

The Municipality of Volos has drawn up a specific water resources management plan with scientific precision, as emphasised by the municipal authority. That work indicates projects that need to be implemented, ensuring the sustainable and proper management of the 40-year old water supply problem. The scientific study, as described by the Municipality of Volos, processed and evaluated the area's geological, hydrological and qualitative data, along with the water requirements for urban, touristic, irrigation and industrial uses.

In light of the above,

1. Can the Commission indicate whether the work can be financed with European funds and in what way?
2. Can the Commission indicate whether the work can be included in the Thessaly Region 2025 emergency works, given that the Regions take a leading role in subsidising projects?

Submitted: 28.1.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(13 March 2025)

For the programming period 2021-2027, Cohesion Policy supports Greece with some EUR 1.2 billion ⁽¹⁾ earmarked to promote the sustainable use of water resources through investments in drinking water and wastewater management under the sectoral programme 'Environment and Climate Change Programme' ⁽²⁾ and the regional programmes.

Measures have been foreseen for improving the quality or adequacy of drinking water, for upgrading wastewater treatment plants, for the protection and improvement of surface and groundwater as well as desalination systems powered by renewable energy in arid and remote islands.

For Member States affected by disasters in 2024 and 2025, reconstruction work after disasters can be financed by the Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction (RESTORE), a recently launched instrument by the European Commission that addresses post-disaster damage that provides additional assistance ⁽³⁾.

In addition, Greece requested EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) ⁽⁴⁾ assistance following the storm 'Daniel' disaster in November 2023. The Commission determined Greece's application eligible for support amounting to EUR 101 million.

The EUSF may cover a part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities ⁽⁵⁾. Private damage is not eligible.

Under the shared management and subsidiarity principles governing the Cohesion Policy Funds, project selection and implementation fall under the responsibility of the Member State.

Accordingly, it is up to the responsible authorities to determine the use of the EUSF funding, in line with the EUSF Regulation.

Therefore, planning choices and preparation of specific projects are under the responsibility of the relevant national and regional authorities.

⁽¹⁾ Public expenditure.

⁽²⁾ <https://peka-program.gr/>

⁽³⁾ Some of the measures covered by RESTORE include the restoration of infrastructure for public services, e.g. energy, water, health and education and protection of cultural heritage, among others.

⁽⁴⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32002R2012>

⁽⁵⁾ 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.