

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001365/25
to the Commission
Georgios Aftias (PPE)
(2 April 2025)**

Subject: Compensation for those affected by the natural disaster in the Aegean and Cyclades islands

In the last week of March, extreme weather events — and in particular heavy rainfall — have caused extensive damage in the Cyclades and Aegean islands at a particularly crucial moment, the start of the tourist season. Catering, hotel and livestock businesses and hospital units have suffered damage, causing a huge blow to the economy of the islands, as well as to the social well-being of their inhabitants, given that they depend to a very large extent on the aforementioned professional activities.

Given this, with which financial instruments will the Commission directly, and without bureaucratic procedures, support those affected by the disaster in the Cyclades and Aegean islands?

Submitted: 2.4.2025

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

The Commission contributes to disaster risk management with EUR 1 billion through Cohesion Policy funds under the relevant 2021-2027 national programmes ⁽¹⁾ In addition, the regional programme of Notio Aigaio ⁽²⁾ allocates EUR 10.5 million for the management of climate-related risks, including storms and floods, specifically in the South Aegean region. 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 enables 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 for public infrastructure to alleviate the socioeconomic impact of natural disasters. Union support could cover up to 95% of the expenditure and an additional pre-financing of 25% is provided. This will ease the budgetary pressure on affected Member States and regions.

Greece may also benefit from financial assistance through the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF). The EUSF can only be activated at the request of Greece 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 ⁽⁴⁾. The EUSF may cover a part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities ⁽⁵⁾. Private damage is not eligible.

⁽¹⁾ Civil Protection Programme 2021-2027: <https://civilprotection-program.gr/programma-politiki-prostasia-2021-2027/>; Environment and Climate Change Programme 2021-2027: <https://peka-program.gr/paroyysi-programma/>.

⁽²⁾ Regional Programme 'Notio AigaioAigaio' 2021-2027: <https://pepna.gr/el/perifereiako-programma-notioy-aigaioy-2021-2027>.

⁽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) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3236>.

⁽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) 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>.

⁽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.