

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001259/26
to the Commission
Aodhán Ó Riordáin (S&D)
(25 March 2026)**

Subject: EU solidarity instrument to protect households from cost-of-living shock linked to Middle East instability

The escalating conflict in the Middle East, driven in part by US and Israeli military action in Iran, poses a serious risk of an inflationary shock to EU Member State economies — comparable to, and potentially worse than, the energy price surge that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

EU households have not yet recovered from that crisis. Member States must be equipped to respond rapidly.

1. Is the Commission assessing the potential impact of the Middle East conflict on EU energy prices and household costs?
2. Will the Commission consider preparing a dedicated solidarity instrument — modelled on the European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) or the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument — to support Member States in protecting workers and vulnerable households from a cost-of-living shock of this nature?
3. What timeline does the Commission envisage for any such preparatory work?

Submitted: 25.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Dombrovskis on behalf of the European Commission
(30 September 2026)**

The Commission released its Spring 2026 Economic Forecast on 21 May 2026 ⁽¹⁾. The forecast provides an assessment of the impact of the energy shock from the conflict in the Middle East on the economies of the Member States, as well as the EU and euro area aggregates. The Commission is monitoring and assessing the situation on a continuous basis ⁽²⁾.

The European instrument for temporary support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) demonstrated the value of EU support in the context of the severe shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to prevent widespread job losses.

However, the current energy shock differs significantly in both scale and nature. Consequently, a SURE-type instrument does not represent the most appropriate policy response.

That being said, with its communication AccelerateEU — Energy Union ⁽³⁾, presented on 22 April 2026, the Commission committed to provide continued assistance to Member States in the design of targeted, timely, and temporary measures to relieve the burden of high energy costs, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, energy-intensive industries, and households, while preserving the incentive to save energy and encouraging a reduction in fossil fuel use.

On 3 June 2026, the Commission proposed to expand the scope of the existing National Escape Clause for defence spending to accommodate the measures undertaken since February 2026 to reduce the dependence on imported fossil fuels and thereby contribute to Europe's energy security and defence, without raising the overall cap of 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP). The flexibility allowed for these measures is to be capped at 0.3% per year, with a cumulative maximum of 0.6% of GDP until 2028 ⁽⁴⁾.

Fiscal sustainability safeguards remain fully in place.

Member States will have the opportunity to request the expansion in the scope of their existing National Escape Clause over the coming months.

⁽¹⁾ https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-forecast-and-surveys/economic-forecasts/spring-2026-economic-forecast-slowdown-growth-energy-shock-drives-inflation_en.

⁽²⁾ See for example: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC146449>.

⁽³⁾ COM(2026) 370 final, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/7fac9eea-5717-4182-a368-bd68c427ff4c_en?filename=Communication.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ Commission Communication 2026 European Semester — Spring Package, COM(2026) 200 final.