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Answer given by Ms Lahbib
on behalf of the European Commission
(13.10.2026)

The Commission stands ready to support and guide the national authorities should they wish to apply for support under the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF). However, the EUSF can only be activated at the request of Greece with a deadline of 12 weeks from the first damage, demonstrating that the total direct damage exceeds the thresholds specified in Article 2 Regulation (EC) 2012/2002¹. The EUSF may cover a part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities².

While the EU has a supporting competence in the area of civil protection, Member States are primarily responsible. This includes preventing and protecting against natural or man-made disasters and allocating the necessary resources for the organisation and staffing of fire and forest services.

The strategic reserve of European disaster response capabilities and stockpiles rescEU³ is created as an additional safety net to provide assistance only in overwhelming situations where capacities at national levels are not, in the circumstances, able to ensure an effective response. Since 2019, the EU is developing the rescEU permanent aerial firefighting fleet, funded the purchase of 12 fire-fighting aircraft and five helicopters, and is looking at ways to further develop these capacities in the future.

The Commission attaches great importance to wildfire prevention, preparedness and risk reduction and to the protection of people, ecosystems and rural economies. On this line the recent Communication on an integrated approach to wildfire risk management⁴ proposes precisely a holistic approach covering prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. At EU level, the Commission supports Member States through policy guidance, funding, and capacity-building.

¹ 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>).

² 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.

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/resceu_en.

⁴ COM(2026) 330 final, Communication from the Commission on integrated wildfire risk management, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/civil_protection/communication_on_integrated_wildfire_risk_management.pdf.