

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001757/24
to the Commission
Michał Dworczyk (ECR)
(18 September 2024)**

Subject: Dramatic situation in flood-hit areas and the need for EU solidarity

My region, Lower Silesia and Opolskie, has been severely affected in recent days by the impact of ongoing extreme flooding: broken bridges, damaged roads, devastated hospitals, schools and public buildings, thousands of destroyed private farms, homes and other buildings. While it is still impossible even to begin estimating the losses, as hundreds of villages are still underwater, it is clear already that massive financial investment will be needed for reconstruction and to recover from the effects of the flooding, and that this will exceed the capacity of the affected communities. The consequences of this disaster will be felt for years to come. They will be a test of solidarity for the Union as a whole, and for the EU institutions a test of the effectiveness and efficiency of resilience and crisis response mechanisms. In this context:

1. Is the Commission ready to provide urgent and adequate material and financial assistance to the regions affected by the flooding?
2. Given the scale and extent of the floods, does the Commission consider that funding under the Solidarity Fund is sufficient to support the countries affected by this disaster, and is it planning to review the Fund in order to ensure that countries affected by the floods receive long-term assistance that is proportionate to their needs?
3. Is the creation of a separate dedicated fund for the repair and construction of flood prevention infrastructure in the areas affected by this disaster, both in Poland and in other EU countries, possible and under consideration?

Submitted: 18.9.2024

**Answer given by Ms Ferreira on behalf of the European Commission
(18 October 2024)**

1. The Commission is ready to provide assistance to countries that were hit by the recent floods. One of the tools available to countries is the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) ⁽¹⁾. The EUSF can only be activated at the request of an affected country, 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 Fund may cover a part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities ⁽²⁾. Private damage is not eligible.

The Commission encourages Member States to use all available EU funding sources, such as Cohesion Policy funds, Common Agricultural Policy funds and funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility in complementarity with the EUSF to achieve a comprehensive reconstruction and to proactively build resilience against future floods. Commission services are closely cooperating with the relevant Managing Authorities to find timely solutions that can address the post-flood needs.

2. The recent mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) ⁽³⁾ increased the annual allocation for the EUSF for the years 2024-2027. The Fund now has an annual budget of EUR 1 016 million ⁽⁴⁾ (in 2018 prices). This is an annual increase of EUR 216 million. A review of the scope of the Fund is not currently planned under the 2021-2027 MFF.

3. The Commission is not currently planning to create a new, separate fund for the repair or construction of flood prevention infrastructure. However, as announced by the Commission President, the Commission is working on providing additional flexibilities under Cohesion Policy.

⁽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⁾ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765 of 29 February 2024 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027.

⁽⁴⁾ EUR 1 144.1 million in 2024 prices.