

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002207/24
to the Commission**

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(22 October 2024)

Subject: EU funds for Austria following the disastrous flooding in September 2024

On 19 September 2024 the Austrian Federal Chancellor reported at the flood summit in Poland that ‘Austria can draw down EUR 500 million in order to help people quickly, repair the damage and rebuild the infrastructure that has been destroyed’. The Commission President also announced that EU funds were to be mobilised for the countries affected by the devastating floods. The Commission President referred to ‘cohesion funds’, the Austrian Federal Chancellor specifically to monies from the ‘Cohesion Fund’. One month later, in response to a media enquiry, the Commission stated that the flood aid that had been pledged could only be paid out if long-term cuts were made elsewhere.

1. Will Austria be receiving EU aid for reconstruction following the disastrous flooding in September 2024, and if so, when and how much aid will be involved and which EU budget resources will be drawn on, given that, as the law stands at present, the Cohesion Fund cannot be drawn on for Austria and what funding has been pledged by the Commission President in this connection, and how will it be disbursed?
2. Was the Commission President aware that no additional EU monies would come from the Cohesion Fund on top of what had been already budgeted for and thus already programmed, and what specific assurances did the Commission President give the Member States concerned at the flood summit in Poland?
3. Has the Commission fully informed the Austrian Federal Chancellor about the conditions for disbursing EU funds, and will the Commission ensure in future that EU aid funds are actually available to all crisis-hit Member States?

Submitted: 22.10.2024

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

1. The Commission adopted on 21 October 2024 its proposal RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction ⁽¹⁾.

It provides flexibilities with regards to cohesion policy resources to support Member States affected by unprecedented climate-related disasters.

Member States affected by natural disasters that have occurred since 1 January 2024 will be able to allocate an amount not exceeding 10% of their European Social Fund Plus and European Regional Development Fund national allocations to support reconstruction and repair measures and to alleviate the negative consequences of such disasters. Member States will benefit from additional pre-financing and high EU co-financing rate. The co-legislators reached an agreement and the amending act entered into force on 24 December 2024.

It will be up to Austria to decide how best to make use of the flexibilities and how much funding to redirect to tackle the effects of the floods. The EU Solidarity Fund can also be activated at the request of Austria within 12 weeks as from when the first damage occurred.

2. + 3. The President of the Commission made a public announcement on 19 September 2024 in Wrocław informing that around EUR 10 billion cohesion policy resources could be mobilised with higher pre-financing and 100% co-financing for the regions affected by the floods.

⁽¹⁾ This is a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) (COM(2024) 496).