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P-002379/2024

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto

On behalf of the European Commission

(18.12.2024)

The EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) can only be activated at the request of Spain within 12 weeks as from when the first damage occurred, demonstrating that the total direct damage exceeds the thresholds specified in Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002¹. The EUSF may cover part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities. This includes, for example, the recovery of essential infrastructure, provision of temporary accommodation to the population, cleaning-up operations, and protection of cultural heritage. The Spanish authorities informed the Commission about their intention to submit an application for the EUSF following the recent floods in Valencia. As provided for in the EUSF Regulation, this will be done once a proper estimate of the damages is carried out and within the 12-month regulatory deadline.

A special emergency procedure and the review of the scope of the Fund is not planned under the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

The recent mid-term revision of the MFF² increased the annual allocation for the EUSF for the years 2024-2027. The Fund now has an annual budget of EUR 1 016 million³ (in 2018 prices). This is an annual increase of EUR 216 million.

The Commission adopted on 21 October 2024 its proposal RESTORE – Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction⁴. The proposal is subject to the co-legislative negotiations. Upon entry into force of the Regulation, based on the Commission's proposal, Member States will have four months, to submit programme changes to the Commission and will receive subsequently pre-financing and reimbursement of expenditure. It will be up to programme authorities to make use of the support and flexibilities provided as quickly as possible.

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 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.

³ EUR 1 144.1 million in 2024 prices.

⁴ 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+).