

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002446/24
to the Commission
Sérgio Gonçalves (S&D)
(6 November 2024)**

Subject: EU support for Madeira wildfire recovery

This summer, the island of Madeira faced devastating wildfires that began on 14 August 2024. These wildfires severely impacted the lives of its residents. Prompt support, especially through EU funding, is essential to aid the recovery of the affected communities.

I understand that the Commission has initiated the process of allocating funds from key EU instruments, including the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund Plus. However, as this proposal must still undergo an ordinary legislative procedure, I am concerned about potential delays and significant time passing while local populations still lack appropriate support.

With this in mind:

1. How soon can the people of Madeira expect to receive EU financial support?
2. What steps could be taken to expedite this process, ensuring timely assistance to those in need?
3. In the interest of future preparedness, could this procedure be simplified to facilitate quicker delivery of support to impacted populations?

Submitted: 6.11.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(18 December 2024)**

1. -2. The Commission adopted on 21 October 2024 its proposal RESTORE — Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction ⁽¹⁾. 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 4 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.

Furthermore, support may be provided from other EU funding instruments, such as the Agricultural Reserve, should the relevant conditions for their use be met. As an EU outermost region, Madeira can access funds under specific EU programmes tailored to its needs: for instance, the POSEI scheme (programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity) can support farmers and BESTLIFE 2030 ⁽²⁾ can help restore its biodiversity.

3. As proposed by the Commission, the proposal allows for making use of the flexibilities and support provided for in case of both recent and future natural disasters before the end of the 2021-2027 programming period — without further regulatory changes to the cohesion policy framework.

⁽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+).

⁽²⁾ BESTLIFE2030 — Grant scheme for biodiversity in EU Overseas: <https://bestlife2030.org/>