

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002710/24
to the Commission
Vangelis Meimarakis (PPE)
(2 December 2024)**

Subject: Flooding and natural disasters in Rhodes and Lemnos

After the unprecedented floods experienced in mainland Greece and many EU Member States, two Greek islands, Rhodes and Lemnos, suffered massive damage due to excessive rainfall.

It is now a fact that the Mediterranean is being tested and its islands are even more vulnerable to the climate crisis. The EU has earmarked 30% of its budget to tackle the climate crisis and what islands need above all is to adapt and be resilient to climate change.

In view of the above:

1. How can a European strategy be developed to protect islands from the climate crisis, especially by taking and funding measures to improve their resilience?
2. How much of the 30% of EU budget funds set aside for the climate can be used to establish and finance climate change adaptation plans for islands and to finance flood prevention and water course restoration projects?
3. How can islands be supported as a matter of priority through the LIFE funding instrument and the EUR 905 million it earmarks for mitigating and adapting to climate change?

Submitted: 2.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(28 January 2025)**

The whole EU territory is susceptible to climate change impacts ⁽¹⁾. As the first European Climate Risk Assessment underlined, risk ownership is shared across the EU, Member States, sub-national and private sector actors, along with the means and responsibility of acting on them. The Commission will continue to contribute to making Europe more climate resilient ⁽²⁾, ⁽³⁾, among others with a new EU Adaptation Plan.

Adaptation measures that meet the relevant criteria are eligible for the 30% budget of the EU funds set aside for climate, including the Cohesion fund ⁽⁴⁾, Next Generation EU ⁽⁵⁾, the European Regional Development Fund ⁽⁶⁾, the Common Agriculture Policy ⁽⁷⁾ and LIFE ⁽⁸⁾. Greece is already receiving substantial funding to prevent and manage climate-related flood risks ⁽⁹⁾.

The EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) ⁽¹⁰⁾ may cover part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities. Private damage is not eligible.

It can only be activated at the request of a Member State 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.

Greece requested EUSF assistance for the storm 'Daniel' disaster in November 2023. The Commission determined Greece's application eligible for support and paid out EUR 101 million in 2024.

Greece has not submitted an EUSF application due to the flooding of Rhodes and Lemnos at the end of November 2024.

⁽¹⁾ European Environment Agency, European Climate Risk Assessment, 2024.

⁽²⁾ EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, COM(2021) 82 final.

⁽³⁾ COM(2024) 91 final.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/

⁽⁵⁾ https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en

⁽⁸⁾ LIFE, https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en

⁽⁹⁾ Under Greece's 2021-2027 Partnership Agreement for Regional Development (ESPA), over EUR 726 million in public funding is allocated to prevent and manage climate-related flood risks.

⁽¹⁰⁾ 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>

The Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation subprogramme of the LIFE Programme ⁽¹⁾ follows a bottom-up approach tailored to local needs and can also offer room for special attention to islands' needs related to climate change.

⁽¹⁾ Budget of EUR 947 million for the period 2021-2027.