



Commission takes further steps to help Member States recover from climate disasters

Brussels, 21 October 2024

Today, the European Commission is taking further steps to **support Member States affected by unprecedented climate-related disasters**.

As announced by European Commission President **von der Leyen** during her visit to Poland on 19 September 2024, the Commission is **proposing amendments to three EU regulations** to ensure that **EU funds can be quickly mobilised in support of post-disaster recovery**.

The amendments concern the Regulations governing the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** and the **Cohesion Fund (CF)**, and the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**, for the 2021-2027 programming period, as well as the Regulation of the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** as part of the 2014-2022 framework.

These proposals come as **a direct response to the floods affecting Central and Eastern European countries and wildfires in Portugal in September 2024**. The proposals taken together could allow the **seven concerned Member States** (Poland, Romania, Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Portugal, and Slovakia) to reprogramme around **€18 billion** (roughly **€17.7 billion** under the Cohesion Policy funds and **€588 million** under the EAFRD) to help in the context of climate-related disasters. These measures will ensure that the EU can **flexibly support all Member States** impacted by recent and potential future **climate-related disasters**.

European Commission President **von der Leyen** said: *"When climate disasters hit, Europe is stronger when it stands together. I saw first-hand the effects of the floods in EU Member States in September and promised to introduce new flexibilities to support Member States to recover, repair, and reconstruct. Today's proposals show that we are delivering on these promises: by injecting liquidity with higher pre-financing and co-financing of EU funds, we are making a real difference for the people and the regions that are harshly hit by these disasters. We are giving the Member States the tools to become more resilient and better prepared for future crises."*

Injecting liquidity with increased pre- and co-financing under Cohesion Policy

Cohesion Policy funds already support Member States to **prevent and recover from climate-related disasters**. However, today's proposals provide Member States with **additional flexibility** to use part of the Funds to **repair damaged infrastructure and equipment, provide food and basic material assistance and social and healthcare support, and temporarily support the financing of short-time work schemes**.

In addition, **two new measures** under the ERDF and ESF+ will be introduced. Firstly, an **additional pre-financing of 30%** will offer an immediate injection of liquidity to **ease the budgetary pressure** on affected Member States. Secondly, the EU will be able to finance **up to 100% of the measures supported, with no national co-financing required** to kick-start the reconstruction work.

A **maximum of 10%** of the existing Cohesion Policy funds earmarked for Member States for the 2021-2027 programming period may be used to **deliver on these objectives**, allowing for transfers between Cohesion Policy funds.

Stronger Rural Development financing possibilities for farmers, forest holders and businesses

In addition, and thanks to the changes proposed today to the EU Rural Development Funds (EAFRD 2014-2022 legal framework), Member States will have more flexibility to **support farmers, forest**

holders, and businesses affected by natural disasters.

The financial support offered by the EAFRD will **be 100% covered by EU funds**. The amendment will allow Member States to directly and swiftly provide **emergency assistance** to farmers, forest holders, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the form of **lump sums**. Moreover, Member States will benefit from more flexibility to introduce and reinforce measures to **restore the production potential** of affected farms and forests.

Next Steps

The proposal will now go through the **ordinary legislative procedure** in the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Once adopted and in line with the principle of **shared management**, interested Member States will have to decide on how best to make use of these flexibilities, how much funding to remobilise to deal with recent disasters, while taking into account their specific needs. Member States will then be required to submit **programme amendments** to the European Commission for review and adoption.

Background

Today's proposal comes as a direct response to the **devastating floods that hit Central and Eastern Europe** caused by storm 'Boris' and the **wildfires that ravaged Portugal** in September 2024, and can **cover natural disasters that have occurred since 1 January 2024**.

The proposal is part of **a wider EU response** that offers Member States possibilities to receive support in the aftermath of climate disasters for both **immediate crisis relief**, through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism, as well as for **longer-term reconstruction and resilience building**, through the European Union Solidarity Fund, the agricultural reserve, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, amongst others.

The possibility to use Cohesion Policy funds to help repair the damages caused by the floods was announced by Commission President **von der Leyen** during her visit to Poland on **19 September 2024**.

Cohesion Policy is the **largest EU funding source** helping EU regions to prevent, prepare, and address the risks of climate-related disasters. For the 2021-2027 programming period, the Cohesion Policy funds (which includes the European Regional Development Fund (and Interreg programmes), Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and Just Transition Fund) already provide **€14 billion in EU financing** to support Member States in preventing and managing climate-related risks.

The **European Union Solidarity Fund** (EUSF) is another key EU instrument to support with post-disaster recovery. Since 2002, the EUSF assistance has been mobilised as **a token of solidarity, offering support to EU Member States and countries negotiating their accession to the EU** that are confronted with natural disasters and major public health emergencies. Given the **increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters**, the Commission obtained a reinforcement of the annual budget of the EUSF in the recent review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The **annual budget** earmarked for the EUSF between 2024-2027 is now around **€1.1 billion**.

Under the **Recovery and Resilience Facility** (RRF), Member States committed close to **€9 billion** in their recovery and resilience plans to finance measures related to **natural disaster preparedness**, including reforms and investments addressing adaptation and prevention of climate change-related risks, such as floods, fires, storms, and droughts.

In addition, the **CAP Strategic Plans** (2023-2027) support investments aimed at **restoring agricultural or forestry potential** following natural disasters, adverse climatic events, or catastrophic events. This includes measures that contribute to **climate change mitigation and adaptation**, with a budget of **€93 billion** from 2023 to 2027.

The CAP 2023-2027 also includes an **agricultural reserve** of at least **€450 million per year**, to help farmers cope with market disruptions or exceptional events affecting agricultural production or distribution. In recent years, the Reserve has been **deployed on multiple occasions** to directly support farmers impacted by exceptional adverse climatic events.

Today's measures, combined with existing available resources, will ensure that Member States can rebuild using the **'build back better' approach** i.e. to build more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive

societies in the future.

For More Information

[Proposal for amendment](#) to Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057

[Proposal for amendment](#) to Regulation (EU) 2020/2220

[Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1058](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1057](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) 2020/2220](#)

[European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#)

[Cohesion Fund \(CF\)](#)

[European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#)

[European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development 2014 – 2022 \(EAFRD\)](#).

[European Union Solidarity Fund \(EUSF\)](#)

[Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#)

[EU Civil Protection Mechanism \(ECPM\)](#)

IP/24/5321

Quote(s):

"When climate disasters hit, Europe is stronger when it stands together. I saw first-hand the effects of the floods in EU Member States in September and promised to introduce new flexibilities to support Member States to recover, repair, and reconstruct. Today's proposals show that we are delivering on these promises: by injecting liquidity with higher pre-financing and co-financing of EU funds, we are making a real difference for the people and the regions that are harshly hit by these disasters. We are giving the Member States the tools to become more resilient and better prepared for future crises."
Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission - 21/10/2024

"We propose these changes to express solidarity and to concretely support people in rebuilding their lives after the devastating floods and wildfires. Member States will be able to use funding from the European Social Fund Plus in a fast, flexible and targeted way, for instance to provide immediate food and basic material assistance to people directly affected by natural disasters, as well as to finance short-time work schemes."
Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights - 21/10/2024

"Climatic disasters are becoming more frequent and more extreme, and farmers are among the first ones impacted. The Commission has always stood by farmers' side and by proposing new measures today to enlarge the scope of financial support, we are keeping true to our commitment. Protecting farmers' means of living and their resilience will always be one of our key objectives."
Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture - 21/10/2024

"Europe looked with sadness at the destruction caused by the floods in Central and Eastern Europe and the wildfires in Portugal. Cohesion Policy is already available to help Member States and regions to both prevent and recover from natural disasters. Given the increased frequency of extreme weather events, it is necessary to create a framework that allows Member States, regions and people affected to act quickly, with more flexibility and full EU support. The proposed amendments, with options for higher pre-financing and 100% EU co-financing, will help Member States to repair and recover from these disasters, while safeguarding the long-term strategic nature of Cohesion Policy investments. I am convinced that when Europe acts in solidarity, Europe is at its best."
Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms - 21/10/2024

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