European Parliament
2024-2029

TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0354

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain with regard to storms in 2026

European Parliament resolution of 21 October 2026 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund to provide assistance to Malta and Italy regarding the storm Harry in January 2026 and to Portugal and Spain following the storms in January and February 2026 (COM(2026)7001 – C10-0226/2026 – 2026/0284(BUD))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2026)7001 – C10-0226/2026),

– having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund[1] (EUSF Regulation),

– having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027[2], and in particular Article 9 thereof,

– having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[3], and in particular point 10 thereof,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European

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1 OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/2012/oj.
2 OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/2093/oj.
3 OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2020/1222/oj.

Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund[4],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)[5],

– having regard to the EEA Report 1/2024 - European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA)[6],

– having regard to the EEA Report 3/2026 - Climate resilience in Europe, 2025 – progress and challenges[7],

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A10-0274/2026),

A. whereas, between 18 and 21 January 2026, storm Harry struck the Maltese islands bringing strong winds, heavy rainfall, increased sea levels and wave activity, causing widespread damage across Malta and Gozo, resulting in total direct damage estimated by the Maltese authorities at EUR 132,97 million and affecting many municipalities, especially coastal and harbour areas; whereas the storm led to significant disruption to the normal functioning of essential services, such as blocked roads and interrupted transport links; whereas damage to the agricultural sector, aquaculture and the fishery industry was also recorded;

B. whereas, between 18 and 21 January 2026, the regions of Sardinia, Sicily and Calabria were affected by storm Harry which brought about intense and persistent rainfall, strong winds and storm surges, resulting in total direct damage estimated by the Italian authorities at EUR 2 995,4 million; whereas the most severe damage occurred in coastal areas and along rivers, where rising water levels significantly affected several dams, and as a result, thousands of people were evacuated and hundreds of homes were declared uninhabitable; whereas the storm also destroyed public buildings, railway lines, port infrastructure and roads, causing severe damage to infrastructure and essential services, which led to the temporary isolation of some communities;

C. whereas restoring damaged transport infrastructure and essential services is particularly important for communities that have been temporarily isolated and for affected island territories, in order to

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4 OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 60, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1058/oj.

5 OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 21, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1057/oj.

6 https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/european-climate-risk-assessment

7 https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/climate-resilience-in-europe-2025-progress-and-challenges

restore accessibility and ensure continuity of services for the population;

D. whereas, between 22 January and 15 February 2026, Portugal experienced a succession of severe storms bringing strong winds, intense precipitation which caused devastating floods and landslides, resulting in total direct damage estimated by the Portuguese authorities at EUR 5 351,97 million; whereas the storms created significant material damage in public and private infrastructure and destroyed numerous homes; whereas, additionally, essential infrastructure and services in the fields of energy, water, wastewater, transport, healthcare and education were interrupted, and the disaster led to the evacuation of thousands of people and to 18 fatalities;

E. whereas, between 22 January and 14 February 2026, Spain was hit by a succession of severe storms that caused greatest damage in the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia and Extremadura, resulting in total direct damage estimated by the Spanish authorities at EUR 4 839,53 million; whereas the intense rainfall associated with the storms led to the evacuation of thousands of people, the closure of over 150 roads and significant structural damage to people’s homes, and, additionally, electricity, water and telecommunications infrastructure were cut off for a prolonged amount of time which caused significant economic damage and left communities isolated;

F. whereas the increasing severity and frequency of floods across Member States reflects the accelerating impacts of climate change, requiring strengthened Union action in adaptation, prevention and resilience measures;

G. whereas the EEA Report 1/2024 ‘European Climate Risk Assessment’ warned that the Union is unprepared for the effects of climate change even if the world manages to keep global temperature rise to 1,5 degrees Celsius, as set out in the Paris Agreement; whereas there is a need for action to avoid the climate risks identified reaching critical levels;

1. Expresses its deepest solidarity with all the victims, their families and all the individuals affected by the storms in Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain in January and February 2026, and with the national, regional and local authorities involved in the relief efforts;

2. Welcomes the decision as a tangible and visible form of the Union’s solidarity with the citizens and regions affected by the storms in Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain; underlines that the assistance from the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) complements the efforts of the Member States concerned, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and the competences of national, regional and local authorities;

3. Highlights the increasing number of severe, destructive and deadly

natural disasters in Europe whose impacts are exacerbated by human activity, despite the efforts already made at Union, national, regional and local level to strengthen disaster preparedness, prevention and resilience and calls on Member States and the Commission to further invest in prevention, resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures to mitigate human and economic losses; notes that Member States should prioritise recovery measures to support the affected populations, primarily the vulnerable communities, to ensure access to adequate housing and essential services during recovery; considers that actions currently financed under the EUSF should continue to be adequately financed under the next MFF, in order to respond to the intensification of natural disasters within the Union and provide tangible support to the Member States and regions affected by such disasters; notes that such financing would allow Member States to respond more effectively and quickly to disasters while other instruments, particularly cohesion funds whose primary purpose is not disaster response, could be preserved;

4. Highlights the particular vulnerability of islands, including island Member States, to the increasing impacts of the climate crisis; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure targeted adaptation, prevention and resilience measures for these regions; believes that islands should receive adequate funding, through simplified administrative procedures and appropriate technical assistance, in order to address their specific structural and climate-related vulnerabilities;

5. Stresses that the EUSF is only a curative instrument and that the Union should also continue the efforts already undertaken to address climate change adaptation, preparedness, prevention, resilience and mitigation by supporting European and national policies to prevent natural disasters; welcomes the progress already made in strengthening the Union’s preparedness and resilience and encourages Member States and the Commission to build on existing measures and instruments as well as strengthening their actions in view of their commitments made in the Paris Agreement, reducing the human and economic impact of future disasters, and ensuring that prevention measures are effective, proportionate and adapted to national, regional and local circumstances;

6. Stresses also the need for preventive measures, not only to mitigate future damage but also to prevent the exacerbation of risk conditions following catastrophic events; in particular, invites Member States to further build comprehensive risk-assessment and adaptation policy architecture, in light of the EEA's evidence of diverse preparedness levels across Member States; further stresses the risks that extreme weather and natural disasters such as storms possess for the public health across Europe and calls on the Commission to consider this aspect in relevant policies; calls on Member States to take into consideration that climate risks and other natural disasters

disproportionately affect vulnerable populations and vulnerable territories due to socio-economic factors hampering the ability of vulnerable groups to recover from disasters; emphasises that all reconstruction financed by EUSF must aim to reduce vulnerability to future natural disasters and be climate-resilient, in accordance with the eligibility conditions and limits laid down in the EUSF Regulation; considers that additional investment needed to strengthen such resilience should be complemented by other relevant instruments; underlines the importance of resilient critical infrastructure as an essential component of Union's economic security and territorial cohesion; highlights the importance of protecting, restoring and reinforcing critical infrastructure and entities against natural risks, in order to enhance the resilience of affected regions;

7. Calls on the Commission to support the Member States in monitoring and exchanging information on preventive measures and health and social care measures in the event of extreme weather, including heatwaves, using existing European instruments; calls for particular attention to older people, persons with disabilities and people with chronic illnesses, to continuity of care and home care, and to the preparedness of healthcare facilities, while respecting national competences; stresses the need to link early warning systems to timely action by health, social and civil protection services at local level;

8. Notes that the mobilisation of EUSF should be accompanied by reinforced investment in disaster prevention and preparedness and climate resilience; encourages the systematic use and operational integration of innovative digital tools, satellite data (e.g. Copernicus), artificial intelligence and early-warning systems to enhance risk assessment, anticipation, disaster preparedness, response and recovery; calls on Member States and relevant authorities to make full use of existing Union programmes and instruments in this area and to strengthen the coordination and interconnection of relevant services and programmes, including across borders; welcomes in particular the support provided through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism to the Portuguese authorities having requested the activation of satellite Earth Observation data from the Copernicus programme to map the flooded areas and the storm impact zone;

9. Insists on the need for effective synergies with other Union policies and programmes and underlines that Member States should make best use of funding opportunities in particular, of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund+ and the rural development programmes; calls for operational coordination between these instruments and the EUSF to avoid gaps in support and double funding of the same expenditure and underlines the importance of adequate flexibility between the different programmes; calls on the Commission and Member States to

maximise possibilities for cooperation with the Union agencies (e.g. European Space Agency, European Environment Agency) to protect Union citizens from repercussions of climate change related natural emergencies;

10. Underscores that assistance provided under the EUSF should not be to the detriment of Union funding received by Member States under other Union policies or programmes; stresses the need to ensure the efficient and transparent use of Union resources, including by making information on the amounts disbursed, the operations supported and the results achieved easily accessible through existing channels; recalls that Member States can grant State aid, in accordance with the applicable Union rules;

11. Draws attention to the specific difficulties faced by businesses in damaged coastal and port areas, including those operating under concessions; calls on the Commission to work with the Member States concerned to identify temporary and proportionate measures to facilitate the restoration of facilities and the resumption of activities, while ensuring legal certainty for operators and compliance with Union law and the principles of transparency and equal treatment;

12. Underlines that citizens, businesses and public authorities affected by a natural disaster should not have to wait unnecessarily long for assistance and that the use of advance payments is therefore welcome where the conditions of the EUSF Regulation are fulfilled; urges also the Commission to explore all possible avenues for accelerating the mobilisation of the EUSF and to simplify its procedures, including by reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, red tape and requirements for affected Member States and final beneficiaries, while ensuring the Union budget is protected in line with the principles leading to sound financial management;

13. Stresses the urgent need to release immediate financial assistance through the EUSF to ensure that support can reach Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain in a timely manner to support a quick and long-lasting recovery; stresses the importance of reducing the time between the submission of an application for EUSF assistance and the financing decision; calls for effort to be made to ensure that EUSF aid reaches its final recipients promptly, including businesses, SMEs, families, and affected citizens, as well as infrastructure reconstruction and material damage repair, all with the corresponding impact assessment and appropriate control mechanisms;

14. Underlines the need to simplify and accelerate internal procedures, through appropriate technical assistance, in order to address specific structural and climate-related vulnerabilities without undermining the institutional balance, in particular the rights of the Parliament as budgetary and discharge authority;

15. Reiterates the importance of effectively communicating to the public the tangible benefits brought about by EUSF, also to strengthen targeted communication and visibility measures, and further increase citizens' awareness of Union tools and programmes and reinforce public's adherence to the European project; underlines that the EUSF is a concrete expression of European solidarity, demonstrating that the Union stands with victims, citizens, communities and regions affected by storms in Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain; stresses that communicating the tangible benefits of EUSF support is essential to strengthening citizens' confidence in the European project and in the Union's capacity to protect people during the increasing number of severe, destructive and deadly natural disasters in Europe; calls on the Member States to share best practices on increasing the EUSF's visibility;

16. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;

17. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX: DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund to provide assistance to Malta and Italy regarding the storm Harry in January 2026 and to Portugal and Spain following the storms in January and February 2026

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund[1], and in particular Article 4(3) thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027[2], and in particular Article 9 thereof,

Having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[3], and in particular point 10 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) The European Union Solidarity Fund ('the Fund') aims to enable the Union to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to emergency situations in order to show solidarity with the population of regions struck by major or regional natural disasters or major public health emergency.

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1 OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/2012/oj.

2 OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/2093/oj.

3 OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2020/1222/oj.

(2) The Fund is not to exceed the ceilings laid down in Article 9 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093, as amended by Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765[4].

(3) On 10 April 2026, Malta submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following storm Harry in January 2026.

(4) On 10 April 2026, Italy submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following storm Harry in January 2026.

(5) On 13 April 2026, Portugal submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following the storms in January and February 2026.

(6) On 17 April 2026, Spain submitted an application to mobilise the Fund following the storms in January and February 2026.

(7) Those applications meet the conditions for providing a financial contribution from the Fund, as laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002.

(8) The Fund should therefore be mobilised to provide a financial contribution to Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

(9) In order to ensure that the Union financial assistance can be made available as rapidly as possible to the Member States affected and to avoid any delay in the mobilisation of the Fund, this Decision should enter into force as a matter of urgency on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and should apply from the date of its adoption,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

For the general budget of the Union for the financial year 2026, the European Union Solidarity Fund shall be mobilised as follows in commitment and payment appropriations in relation to natural disasters:

(a) the amount of EUR 3 724 057 shall be provided to Malta following storm Harry in January 2026;

(b) the amount of EUR 74 884 983 shall be provided to Italy following storm Harry in January 2026;

(c) the amount of EUR 261 483 810 shall be provided to Portugal following the storms in January and February 2026;

(d) the amount of EUR 149 055 370 shall be provided to Spain following the storms in January and February 2026.

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[4] 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 (OJ L, 2024/765, 29.2.2024, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/765/oj).

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from … [*the date of its adoption*][*].

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament *For the Council*

The President *The President*

[*] *Date to be inserted by the Parliament before the publication in OJ.*