Procedure file

Basic information

BUD - Budgetary procedure	2022/0337(BUD)	Procedure completed

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021

Subject
3.70.11 Natural disasters, Solidarity Fund
8.70.51 2021 budget
8.70.52 2022 budget

Geographical area
Austria
Spain
Netherlands
Greece
Luxembourg
Belgium
Germany FR

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets		18/10/2022
		HAHN Henrike	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		ASIMAKOPOULOU Anna-Michelle	
		GARDIAZABAL RUBIAL Eider	
		TORVALDS Nils	
		RZOŃCA Bogdan	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	REGI Regional Development	Chair on behalf of committee	24/10/2022
		OMARJEE Younous	
Council of the European Union			
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Budget	HAHN Johannes	

Key events

14/10/2022	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2022)0665	Summary
09/11/2022	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/11/2022	Vote in committee		
22/11/2022	Budgetary report tabled for plenary	A9-0282/2022	Summary
14/12/2022	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/12/2022	Decision by Parliament	T9-0440/2022	Summary
14/12/2022	Draft budget approved by Council		
10/01/2023	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/0337(BUD)
Procedure type	BUD - Budgetary procedure
Procedure subtype	Mobilisation of funds
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	BUDG/9/10317

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2022)0665	14/10/2022	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE737.390	20/10/2022	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE737.452	09/11/2022	EP	
Specific opinion	REGI	PE738.597	10/11/2022	EP	
Budgetary report tabled for plenary, 1st reading		A9-0282/2022	22/11/2022	EP	Summary
Budgetary text adopted by Parliament		T9-0440/2022	14/12/2022	EP	Summary

Final act

Decision 2023/68
OJ L 007 10.01.2023, p. 0025

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021

PURPOSE: to mobilise the European Union solidarity fund to assist Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece following natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: the European Union Solidarity 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.

This proposed decision covers the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) for an amount of EUR 718 482 761 to provide assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece following natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021.

Between 12 and 15 July 2021, a slow-moving low-pressure system named Bernd passed over Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Austria causing heavy rainfall and flooding. Whereas, Spain was hit by a volcanic eruption on the Island of La Palma and Crete, Greece, was hit by an earthquake, both causing substantial damage.

Severe flooding

In October 2021, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Luxembourg respectively submitted applications for estimated total direct damage of:

- EUR 29.21 billion;

- EUR 5.56 billion;

- EUR 500 million;

- EUR 84.6 million;

- EUR 193.3 million.

Volcanic eruption and earthquake

For Spain and Greece, they submitted respective applications for an estimated total direct damage of:

- EUR 1 billion (the Commission awarded an advance of EUR 5 391 796);

- EUR 143.42 million (the Commission awarded an advance of EUR 896 375 to Greece).

Conclusion

The Commission considers that the applications of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece fulfil the conditions for a financial contribution from the Fund as set out in Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002. It therefore proposes to mobilise the EUSF within the framework of the general budget of the Union for the 2021 financial year, in order to grant the amount of:

- EUR 612 611 256 to Germany in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 87 737 427 to Belgium in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 4 713 027 to the Netherlands in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 797 520 to Austria in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 1 822 056 to Luxembourg in relation to the floods of 2021;

- EUR 9 449 589 to Spain in relation to the volcano eruption in La Palma;

- EUR 1 351 886 to Greece in relation to the earthquake in Crete.

This mobilisation is accompanied by DEC No 20/2022 that proposes to transfer the amount of EUR 668 482 761 from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) reserve line to the EUSF operational budget line, both in commitments and payments.

In addition to the transferred appropriations from the SEAR reserve line, this mobilisation will be financed through the use of the amount of EUR 50 million in commitment and payment appropriations already inscribed in the General Budget 2022 in accordance with the EUSF Regulation for covering advances. The already paid advances to Spain and Greece of the total amount of EUR 6 288 171 will be deducted before the payment of the balance.

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021

The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Henrike HAHN (Greens/EFA, DE) on the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund to provide assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021.

Members called on the Parliament to approve the decision annexed to the draft resolution.

The Commission proposal seeks to mobilise the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) to grant financial assistance for a global amount of EUR 718 482 761 relating to natural disasters that took place in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece in the course of 2021.

The report proposed that for the general budget of the Union for the financial year 2021, the European Union Solidarity Fund should be mobilised as follows in commitment and payment appropriations in relation to natural disasters:

For the flooding:

- EUR 612 611 256 to Germany;

- EUR 87 737 427 to Belgium;

- EUR 4 713 027 to the Netherlands;

- EUR 797 520 to Austria;

- EUR 1 822 056 to Luxembourg.

For the volcano:

- EUR 9 449 589 to Spain (La Palma).

For the earthquake:

- EUR 1 351 886 to Greece (Crete).

Members stressed the urgent need to release financial assistance through the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) to ensure that support can reach the affected regions in a timely manner. They regretted at the same time that the maximum amount available for this EUSF mobilisation is much lower than the potential aid amount that could be needed and comes more than a year after the events took place due to the inflexible mobilisation rules of the EUSF. They called on the Commission to explore further possibilities for additional funding.

The committee reiterated its concern about the decision to merge the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR) and the EUSF in the current MFF, which has led to serious shortcomings, and significantly reduced the overall funding available. It considers that the available resources for EUSF should be substantially increased and made available in a more timely manner as part of the ambitious multiannual financial framework revision.

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund: assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021

The European Parliament adopted by 555 votes to 7, with 4 abstentions, a resolution 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 Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021.

Parliament approved the decision to mobilise the following amounts (in commitment and payment appropriations) within the general budget of the Union established for the financial year 2022 for the European Union Solidarity Fund in respect of natural disasters:

a) an amount of EUR 612 611 256 provided to Germany in relation to the floods in 2021;

b) an amount of EUR 87 737 427 provided to Belgium in relation to floods in 2021;

c) an amount of EUR 4 713 027 provided to the Netherlands in relation to floods in 2021;

d) an amount of EUR 797 520 provided to Austria in relation to floods in 2021;

e) an amount of EUR 1 822 056 provided to Luxembourg in relation to floods in 2021;

f) an amount of EUR 9 449 589 to Spain in connection with the volcanic eruption in La Palma;

g) an amount of EUR 1 351 886 to Greece in connection with the earthquake in Crete.

In its resolution, Parliament stressed the urgency need to release financial assistance through the EUSF to ensure that support can reach the affected regions in a timely manner. It regrets at the same time that the maximum amount available for this EUSF mobilisation is much lower than the potential aid amount that could be needed and comes more than a year after the events took place due to the inflexible mobilisation rules of the EUSF. It called therefore on the Commission to explore further possibilities for additional funding.

The resolution stressed that the effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, coupled with the consequences of severe natural disasters in 2022, have placed the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve under extreme pressure. Given that the number and severity of emergencies are unpredictable,

Parliament reiterated its position that the annual ceiling of the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve for the period 2021-2027 is not adequate to respond to emergency situations.

Parliament expressed its concern about the decision to merge the emergency aid reserve and the EUSF in the current multi-annual financial framework, which has led to serious shortcomings and considerably reduced the overall funding available. It invited the Commission to present a model for a more rapid and timely mobilisation of the EUSF. The resources available for the EUSF should be substantially increased and made available more time manner as part of the ambitious revision of the multiannual financial framework.

Members stressed that an ambitious revision of the multiannual financial framework should include splitting the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve into two strands - the Emergency Aid Reserve and the EUSF - and increasing the annual appropriations from the current EUR 1.2 billion for the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve as a whole to EUR 1 billion for each strand, at 2018 prices.

Parliament stressed the need to reconsider the architecture of the EUSF mechanism in order to make it faster, more flexible and more responsive and therefore called for a revision of the EUSF regulation.