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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 Romania and Italy in relation to natural disasters in 2022 and to Türkiye in relation to the earthquakes in February 2023

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

This decision covers the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund (hereinafter referred to as ‘the EUSF’) in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002¹ (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Regulation’) for an amount of EUR 454 835 030 to provide assistance to Romania and Italy in relation to the natural disasters that took place in these countries in 2022 and to Türkiye in relation to the earthquakes in February 2023.

This mobilisation is accompanied by DEC No 10/2023 that proposes to transfer the amount of EUR 446 836 375 from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (hereinafter referred as ‘the 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 7 998 655 in commitments and payment appropriations already inscribed in the General Budget 2023 in accordance with Article 4a(4) of the EUSF Regulation.

2. INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

2.1 Romania –major disaster: drought

Between March and August 2022, Romania was affected by a severe and broad drought with three main peaks, respectively, at the end of March, in mid-April and in July-August.

Subsequently, Romania applied for financial assistance from the EUSF.

- (1) On 6 September 2022, Romania submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following the drought in the summer of 2022.
- (2) Romania applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks from the date on which the public authorities took first official action against the effects of the disaster, which was on 16 June 2022. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the Regulation.
- (3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.
- (4) The Romanian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 1,31 billion. This amount exceeds the ‘major natural disaster’ threshold for Romania of 0,6% of the Gross National Income (GNI), which was EUR 1 290,495 million in 2022. Therefore, the disaster qualifies as a ‘major natural disaster’ according to Article 2(2) of the Regulation.
- (5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the Regulation.

¹ 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) No 461/2020 of the European Parliament and the Council of 30 March 2020 (OJ L 99, 31.3.2020, p. 9).

- (6) Romania did not request the payment of an advance pursuant to Article 4a of the Regulation.
- (7) From March 2022, severe drought hit the south-eastern part of Romania particularly hard. Crops have been negatively impacted by the drought and two consecutive heatwaves at the end of June – beginning of July 2022. Precipitation arrived too late to compensate and alleviate vegetation and crop stress. As a result of wetter and cooler conditions at the end of August and the beginning of September, the hot and dry period receded in autumn. Romania was also one of the most heavily affected countries by wildfires in 2022. Data estimated by the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) show that about 163 536 hectares were burnt. In 2022, the wildfires in Romania were mainly concentrated in two regions, the western areas of the country in which the most affected vegetation types were forests and transitional shrub lands and the Danube delta on the East of the country, in which a great number of large fires occurred.
- (8) The Romanian authorities did not request assistance through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.
- (9) Romania estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the Regulation at EUR 34,69 million and presented it broken down by type of operation. The largest share of the cost of emergency operations (over EUR 22,35 million) concerns rescue services, including firefighting actions, supply of water to the population and to the affected agricultural fields. The second largest share of cost concerns the cleaning up of the disaster-stricken areas and natural zones amounting to EUR 9,73 million. The third largest share of cost concerns the restoration of working order of infrastructure in the fields of water and waste water, and transport amounting to EUR 2,6 million.
- (10) As regards the legislative measures to mitigate the negative effects of the drought and heat waves of 2022, at local level, action plans have been put into place after June 2022. Due to the drought of 2007 in 2008, the National Committee for Combating Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification was established. In 2010, the Committee developed the National Strategy on reducing the effects of drought, preventing and combating land degradation and desertification, in the short, medium and long term. In 2020 Romania approved a National Disaster Risk Management Plan. Among the 10 risks evaluated, in the period 2020-2028 the priority emphasis is placed on 5 natural risks: earthquake, floods, forest fires, epidemics / pandemics and drought.
- (11) At the date of submitting the application, Romania was not subject to infringement proceedings concerning Union legislation relating to the nature of the disaster.
- (12) The Romanian authorities did not indicate any insurance coverage of eligible cost.

2.2 Italy- regional disaster: flood in the Marche Region

Since the early afternoon of 15 September 2022, the central Italian regions, including the Marche region were affected by intense rainfall resulting in fluvial and flash flood events.

Subsequently, Italy applied for financial assistance from the EUSF.

- (1) On 8 December 2022, Italy submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following the flood in September 2022.

- (2) Italy applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster on 15 September 2022. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the Regulation.
- (3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.
- (4) The application presented the event as a ‘regional natural disaster’ as laid down in Article 2(3) of the Regulation, which is any natural disaster in a region at NUTS level 2 of an eligible State resulting in direct damage exceeding 1,5% of that region's gross domestic product (GDP). The Italian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 837,56 million. This amount represents 1,98% of GDP of the Marche region, and it exceeds the applicable ‘regional disaster’ threshold of 1,5% of the Region’s GDP, which was EUR 635,88 million in 2022. In the light of the above, the disaster qualifies as a ‘regional natural disaster’.
- (5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the Regulation.
- (6) Italy did not request the payment of an advance pursuant to Article 4a of the Regulation.
- (7) Between 15 and 17 September 2022, the central Italian regions were affected by intense rainfall resulting in fluvial and flash flood events. In particular, the storm cells that developed on the Umbrian side of the Apennines affected the mountain area of the Marche, ultimately producing intense and localized thunderstorms with remarkable precipitation depths on the 15 September. Due to the extreme meteorological event, the provinces of Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, and Macerata, have experienced floodings and erosion along the main and secondary rivers, resulting in the destruction or damage of infrastructure, extensive flooding in the floodplain as well as damage to both public and private buildings and goods. Three rivers have also overtopped their banks and flooded the surrounding areas. The overall area affected by the extreme meteorological event represents 43% of the total land area of the Marche region. The consequences of the event were dramatic. In addition to the extensive economic losses, 12 people lost their lives.
- (8) The Italian authorities did not request assistance through the European Emergency Response Coordination centre (ERCC) but the Italian Civil Protection Department has kept the ERCC updated on the progress of disaster management activities.
- (9) Italy estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the Regulation at EUR 169,07 million and presented it broken down by type of operation. The largest share of the cost of emergency operations (over EUR 67,57 million) concerns temporary accommodation and rescue services. The second largest share of cost concerns the restoration of the working order of infrastructure and plant in the fields of energy, water, waste water, telecoms, transport, health, and education amounting to EUR 59,85 million. The third largest share of costs concerns the cleaning up of the disaster-stricken area amounting to EUR 23,66 million. The fourth largest share of cost concerns the securing of preventive infrastructure and measures of protection of cultural heritage amounting to EUR 17,99 million.
- (10) Italy has transposed the Directive 2007/60/EC of European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 through the legislative Decree of 23 February 2010, n.

49 regarding the implementation of Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk". The Legislative Decree n. 49/2010 states that flood hazard maps and flood risks maps need to be adopted for areas identified according to the same piece of legislation. In addition, before 22 December 2015 a flood risk management plan divided into river basin districts had to be approved.

- (11) At the date of submitting the application Italy was not subject to infringement proceedings concerning Union legislation relating to the nature of the disaster.
- (12) The Italian authorities did not indicate any insurance coverage of eligible cost.

2.3 Türkiye- major disaster: earthquakes

On 6 February 2023, two major earthquakes of 7,8M_w and 7,5M_w magnitude² hit southern Türkiye in the region of Kahramanmaraş (close to the border with northern Syria). On 20 February 2023, another powerful earthquake of 6,3 M_w hit the region of Hatay.

Subsequently, Türkiye applied for financial assistance from the EUSF.

- (1) On 20 April 2023, Türkiye submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following the earthquakes in February 2023. Türkiye is a country involved in accession negotiations with the Union and, therefore, according to Article 2(1) of the EUSF Regulation is eligible to apply for assistance from the EUSF.
- (2) Türkiye applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster on 6 February 2023. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the Regulation.
- (3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.
- (4) The Turkish authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at EUR 81,7 billion. The Commission has accepted EUR 78,8 billion as plausible total direct damage. This amount exceeds the applicable 'major natural disaster' threshold for Türkiye of EUR 3 000 million in 2011 prices which corresponds to EUR 3 804,725 million in current prices in 2023. Therefore, the disaster qualifies as a 'major natural disaster' according to Article 2(2) of the Regulation.
- (5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the Regulation.
- (6) Türkiye is a country involved in accession negotiations with the Union and thus not an EU member state and, therefore, it does not qualify for the payment of an advance pursuant to Article 4a of the Regulation.
- (7) The two major earthquakes of 6 February 2023 created widespread damage and tens of thousands of fatalities. There were more than 10 000 aftershocks in the three weeks that followed. On 20 February 2023, another earthquake of 6,3M_w hit the region of Hatay. The seismic sequence was the result of shallow strike-slip faulting. The 7,8M_w earthquake of 6 February is the largest in Türkiye since the 1939 Erzincan

² M_w - "Richter" seismic magnitude scale or moment magnitude scale.

earthquake of the same magnitude, and jointly the second strongest recorded in the history of the country, after the North Anatolia earthquake of 1668.

- (8) As a result of the earthquakes, more than 50 thousand people lost their lives and significant material losses were suffered in 11 provinces. According to damage assessment, close to 1 million buildings suffered damage, of which approximately 280 000 collapsed or sustained severe damage. The earthquakes severely damaged road, railway, communication, energy, natural gas supply networks and water infrastructure. An estimated 14 million people, or 16 % percent of Türkiye population, were affected. Due to the earthquakes, 271 060 personnel have been deployed to the region including 35 250 search and rescue personnel. Thousands of heavy work machines, 75 aircraft and 108 helicopters have worked in the region. In the first months 332 tent-cities and 189 container cities were installed in the in the affected region. Nearly 1,6 million people have been given shelter in the earthquake-affected region. In other provinces, 329 960 citizens affected by the disaster are provided with accommodation services. In addition, there are approximately 3,5 million registered Syrians under temporary protection (SuTPs) in Türkiye. The affected region hosts more than 1.7 million Syrians UTP.
- (9) In addition to the mobilisation of all available national forces, international humanitarian and civil protection assistance was requested. Türkiye is a participating state in the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). After the activation of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) by Türkiye, 20 EU Member States together with Albania, Montenegro, Norway, and Serbia have offered teams or assistance in coordination with the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and the Turkish authorities.
- (10) On 20 March 2023, the Commission and the Swedish Presidency of the Council, in coordination with the Turkish authorities, organised an International Donors' Conference. In this Conference, the Commission pledged to support Türkiye with EUR 1 billion.
- (11) Türkiye estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the Regulation at EUR 15,109 billion and presented it broken down by type of operation. The largest share of the cost of emergency operations (EUR 9,1 billion) concerns restoration to working order of infrastructure in the fields of health, education, transportation, and others. The second largest share of cost concerns temporary accommodation and rescue services amounting to EUR 3,3 billion. The third largest share of cost concerns the cleaning up of disaster-stricken areas/natural zones amounting to EUR 2 billion. The fourth largest share of cost concerns the securing of preventive infrastructure and protection of cultural heritage amounting to EUR 0,6 billion.
- (12) The Turkish authorities did not include costs covered by insurance in the eligible cost calculations.

2.4 Conclusion

In light of the considerations set out above and following the assessment of the submitted information, the Commission concludes that the disasters referred to in the applications submitted by Romania, Italy and Türkiye meet the conditions set out in the Regulation for mobilising the EUSF.

3. FINANCING FROM THE EUSF ALLOCATION 2023

Council Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021-2027³ (hereafter "the MFF regulation"), and in particular Article 9 thereof allows for the mobilisation of the EUSF in the context of the SEAR. Point 10 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation on budgetary matters and on sound financial management⁴ (IIA) as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources, lays down the modalities for the mobilisation of the EUSF in the context of the SEAR.

As solidarity was the main justification for the creation of the EUSF, the Commission takes the view that aid should be progressive. Consequently, the portion of the damage exceeding the “**major natural disaster**” threshold for mobilising the EUSF (i.e. 0,6 % of GNI or EUR 3 billion in 2011 prices, whichever is the lower amount) should give rise to higher aid intensity than the portion of the damage below the threshold. That means that the aid amount for a country affected by disaster complying with the conditions for a ‘major natural disaster’ is calculated by adding up two amounts: 2,5% of the total direct damage under the threshold and 6% for the part of the total direct damage above the threshold.

The rate applied for defining the aid amounts for ‘**regional natural disasters**’, which remains below the national threshold, is 2,5% of total direct damage. The contribution may not exceed the estimated total cost of eligible operations.

The methodology for calculating the aid was set out in the 2002-2003 Annual Report on the EUSF and accepted by the Council and the European Parliament. The Commission therefore proposes to the budget authority to mobilise the following amounts for the applications from Romania and Italy:

Member States	Qualification of disaster	Total direct damage (EUR)	Regional disaster threshold (EUR)	Major disaster threshold (EUR)	2,5% of total direct damage (up to the threshold for major disasters) (EUR)	6% of direct damage above threshold (EUR)	Total amount of aid proposed (EUR)
Romania-drought	Major (Art. 2(2))	1 317 721 000	N/A	1 290 495 000	32 262 375	1 633 560	33 895 935
Italy-flood	Regional (Art. 2(3))	837 563 818	635 880 000	N/A	20 939 095	N/A	20 939 095
TOTAL							54 835 030

In accordance with Article 9(2) of the MFF Regulation, the overall annual ceiling of the SEAR is EUR 1 200 000 000 in 2018 prices or EUR 1 324 897 000 in current prices. Article 9(4) of the MFF Regulation stipulates that 25% of the overall annual SEAR allocation (EUR 331 224 250 in current prices for 2023) becomes available for all the components of SEAR as of 1 October. Also, in accordance with Article 9 (4) of the MFF Regulation, the maximum

³ OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.

⁴ OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

amount that can be mobilised by the EUSF is the 50% of the overall SEAR allocation after the deduction of the above mentioned 25%.

Therefore, the maximum amount that can be mobilised by the EUSF from the 2023 SEAR allocation at this stage is EUR 496 836 375. In accordance with Article 4a (4) of the EUSF Regulation, the amount of EUR 50 000 000 has been already inscribed in the General Budget 2023 for the payment of possible future advances.

Amount available under the EUSF in 2023:	
Total annual 2023 SEAR allocation	1 324 897 000
Annual 2023 SEAR allocation earmarked for the EUSF	496 836 375
- Amount to be mobilised for Romania and Italy	- 54 835 030
Remaining amount to be mobilised (including EUR 50 million inscribed in the Budget in accordance with Article 4a(4) of the EUSF Regulation)	442 001 345

As regards the application from Türkiye, the same methodology for calculating the EUSF aid as set out in the 2002-2003 Annual Report on the EUSF and accepted by the European Parliament and the Council is applied.

	<i>Qualification of disaster</i>	<i>Total direct damage (EUR)</i>	<i>Major disaster threshold (EUR)</i>	<i>2,5% of total direct damage up to the threshold (EUR)</i>	<i>6% of direct damage above threshold (EUR)</i>	<i>Potential aid amount (EUR)</i>	<i>Total amount of aid proposed (EUR)</i>
Türkiye - earthquake	<i>Major (Art. 2(2))</i>	78 799 164 182	3 804 725 000	95 118 125	4 499 666 351	4 594 784 476	400 000 000

The calculation of the potential EUSF aid for Türkiye leads to an amount which exceeds the budgetary availabilities at this stage. The Commission proposes to mobilise the EUSF for Türkiye in line with the anticipated amount of the EUSF support within the Commission's pledge at the International Donors' conference on 20 March 2023, which is EUR 400 million. After this mobilisation, the remaining amount will be EUR 42 001 345.

Proposal for a

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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 Fund⁵ and in particular Article 4(3) 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 on budgetary matters and on sound financial management⁶ (IIA) as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources, 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.
- (2) The Fund is not to exceed the ceilings as laid down in Article 9 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2020/2093⁷
- (3) On 6 September 2022, Romania submitted an application to mobilise the Fund, following the drought in the summer of 2022.
- (4) On 8 December 2022, Italy submitted an application to mobilise the Fund, following the flood in the Marche Region in September 2022.
- (5) On 20 April 2023, Türkiye submitted an application to mobilise the Fund, following the earthquakes in February 2023.
- (6) The above mentioned applications meet the conditions for providing a financial contribution from the Fund, as laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002.

⁵ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3.

⁶ OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

⁷ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021-2027 (OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 11).

- (7) The Fund should therefore be mobilised in order to provide a financial contribution to Romania, Italy and Türkiye.
- (8) In order to minimise the time taken to mobilise the Fund, this Decision 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 2023, 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 33 895 935 shall be provided to Romania in relation to the drought in summer 2022;
- (b) the amount of EUR 20 939 095 shall be provided to Italy in relation to the flood in the Marche Region in September 2022;
- (c) the amount of EUR 400 000 000 shall be provided to Türkiye in relation to the earthquakes in February 2023.

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

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