



Plenary sitting

B10-0061/2024

17.9.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 136(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the devastating floods in central and eastern Europe, the loss of lives and the EU's preparedness to act on such disasters exacerbated by climate change (2024/2817(RSP))

Mohammed Chahim, Tiemo Wölken, Marcos Ros Sempere, Andreas Schieder, Krzysztof Śmiszek, Dan Nica, Klára Dobrev, Victor Negrescu
on behalf of the S&D Group

B10-0061/2024

**European Parliament resolution on the devastating floods in central and eastern Europe, the loss of lives and the EU's preparedness to act on such disasters exacerbated by climate change
(2024/2817(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2022 on the consequences of drought, fire, and other extreme weather phenomena: increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law)³,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration⁴ (Nature Restoration Law),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2023 on a European Day for the victims of the global climate crisis⁵,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy⁶ (Common Provisions Regulation),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund⁷,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund⁸,

¹ OJ C 125, 5.4.2023, p. 135.

² OJ C 232, 16.6.2021, p. 28.

³ OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1119/oj>.

⁴ OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj>.

⁵ OJ C, C/2024/488, 23.1.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/488/oj>.

⁶ OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj>.

⁷ OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 60, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1058/oj>.

⁸ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3 ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/2012/oj>.

- having regard to Rule 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas individual extreme weather events cannot be directly attributed to a specific cause; whereas it is clear, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that the climate crisis is leading to more frequent and intense extreme weather events such as floods, storms and heatwaves; whereas this means that precipitation and storms are becoming more severe, heatwaves hotter and droughts drier;
- B. whereas, according to data from the Commission’s Copernicus Climate Change Service, August 2024 was 1.51 °C above the pre-industrial level and marked the thirteenth month in a 14-month period during which the average global surface air temperature exceeded 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels;
- C. whereas the ongoing flooding in central and eastern Europe in September 2024 is caused by record heavy rainfall from Storm Boris, an extremely humid Genoa low; whereas the flooding began in Austria and Czechia, subsequently spreading to Poland, Romania and Slovakia, and later to Germany and Hungary;
- D. whereas, even with the multiannual financial framework (MFF) revision, the budget of the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) is still insufficient to mount an adequate response to major natural disasters and give expression to European solidarity with disaster-hit regions;
- E. whereas there is a need for coordinated local, regional, national and cross-border action to mitigate the immediate and future effects of such natural disasters, including sustainable flood management systems, climate adaptation measures and increased resilience;
- F. whereas urgent action is needed to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and significantly enhancing efforts on adaptation and resilience across all sectors, in order to minimise and manage the impacts on the environment, human and animal health, agriculture and the economy;
- G. whereas, according to Eurobarometer data, the majority of Europeans believe that the transition to a green economy should be accelerated, and nearly 4 in 10 EU citizens report feeling personally exposed to environmental and climate-related risks and threats;
- H. whereas floods, like other extreme weather events, have a disproportionate social impact on vulnerable groups compared to the general population; whereas senior citizens, children, those in poor health, economically disadvantaged individuals, and emergency services and clean-up professionals, are consistently among those most impacted, suffering both physically and mentally either immediately following such events or in the long term; whereas those lacking stable housing and relying on precarious labour are more acutely affected by natural disasters; whereas another key group at risk of cascading health and economic impacts from droughts and floods are farmers and rural communities, whose livelihoods rely on stable, predictable weather and climate conditions;
- 1. Conveys its deepest sympathy to and solidarity with the victims, their families and all the people and communities affected by the ongoing extreme weather events and

devastating flooding in central and eastern Europe, including in Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia; expresses solidarity with those impacted by the wildfires in Greece and Portugal; recognises the profound emotional and material toll these disasters have taken on individuals and communities, and, in these moments of hardship and loss, stands with those affected;

2. Commends the unwavering efforts and dedication of the professional and volunteer fire departments, rescue organisations, volunteers and military personnel in the countries affected by the floods and other natural disasters across Europe; believes that their courageous actions, alongside those of national, regional and local authorities and members of the public who have risked their lives to save others, protect homes and safeguard infrastructure, are deserving of the highest praise; stresses that these emergency services have played a vital role in saving lives, evacuating vulnerable areas and protecting property in incredibly challenging conditions, and that their willingness to act, even at great personal risk, has been crucial in mitigating the disaster;
3. Expresses its deep concern over the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events across the EU, including heavy precipitation, widespread flooding, heatwaves and wildfires, which have serious and direct impacts on human health, livelihoods, housing, infrastructure and agriculture; underscores the urgent need to strengthen the EU's collective response to these adverse events through enhanced civil protection and climate adaptation and mitigation measures, ensuring the safety of people, the protection of their livelihoods and the resilience of the economy;
4. Believes that these extreme weather conditions, as part of the ongoing climate emergency, are a sign of the need for more ambitious action on climate change mitigation and adaptation;
5. Considers that the EU should play a leading role in this process and reinforce its efforts in all sectors; recalls that, in line with the European Climate Law, the Paris Agreement and the best available science, the EU should step up its climate action both on mitigation, to limit global warming to 1.5 °C compared to pre-industrial levels, and on adaptation, to foster resilience;
6. Calls on the Member States to prioritise and identify short-, medium- and long-term restoration measures for ecosystems that are degraded as a result of extreme weather events; calls, furthermore, for EU guidelines on post-emergency restoration plans to identify priority areas for the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after disasters caused by floods, forest fires, heatwaves or droughts, including recommendations on increasing resilience and revitalising livelihoods, economies and the affected environment in line with the One Health approach;
7. Calls for the swift adoption of a robust EU climate adaptation law to coordinate Member State efforts in enhancing adaptation and resilience, in line with the objectives of the European Climate Law; notes that this law should establish measurable targets across key areas, such as water, health, infrastructure, the economy and spatial planning; notes, specifically, that it should ensure that all critical infrastructure is climate-proof by 2030 and that all Member States implement sustainable water management plans by 2027;

8. Calls for the full implementation of the 2030 climate and energy framework and the Fit for 55 agenda to reduce human-made emissions responsible for climate change, and for increased EU ambition through the adoption of new post-2030 targets and a comprehensive revision of the European Climate Law;
9. Calls on the Member States to fully and effectively implement the Nature Restoration Law, which will enhance synergies between measures for climate change mitigation, adaptation, disaster prevention and nature restoration; expects this law to play a crucial role in promoting the restoration of drought-resilient ecosystems, including multi-age, multi-species and biodiverse forests with continuous cover, as well as wetlands, natural vegetation, floodplain dynamics and landscape-wide natural infiltration systems, while also improving river basin resilience;
10. Underlines the negative, long-term influence that natural disasters have on economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU by hindering the implementation of EU cohesion policy; recognises the particular vulnerability of the territories listed in Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which often have limited resources for recovery;
11. Calls on the Commission to activate, without undue delay, the European Solidarity Reserve and the Emergency Aid Reserve to urgently enable assistance with the clean-up operations and to counter immediate health risks;
12. Calls for the activation of mechanisms, such as the EUSF, to provide financial assistance to countries in need; highlights that it is vital for aid and funding to be provided to the flood-stricken regions in as quick, easy and flexible a manner as possible, and urges all affected countries to continue providing emergency relief, including food, clean water, medical assistance and temporary shelter to displaced people;
13. Recalls, however, that the EUSF has been amended several times in order to expand its scope, and that since 2022, it has included major health emergencies even though its overall financial envelope has not grown; calls, therefore, for the EUSF budget to be significantly increased to help regions anticipate and mitigate the effects of climate change;
14. Recommends that, when rebuilding critical infrastructure, including transport, healthcare, water and energy systems, national, regional and local governments ensure that this infrastructure is designed to withstand future extreme weather events; calls, therefore, on local, regional and national actors to accelerate the implementation of climate adaptation measures, particularly flood prevention infrastructure such as dams, levees and drainage systems, and natural solutions such as reforestation and wetland restoration;
15. Underlines the synergies between the EUSF, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the climate change adaptation component of the European Regional Development Fund and territorial cooperation programmes, which are essential in creating a comprehensive response and resilience package;
16. Considers that regional investments through the EU budget should remain under shared

management for programming and implementation in order to be able to respond to the needs of Member States, regions and urban, rural and remote areas, especially in order to enable urban and rural areas to adapt to new challenges, such as floods; asks the Commission, the Member States and regional authorities to use and enhance existing mechanisms to detect and fight irregularities, fraud and corruption under any EU financial instrument, including in cohesion policy funding and emergency relief aid;

17. Recalls the commitments made under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other international agreements aimed at disaster risk reduction and environmental sustainability;
18. Encourages the strengthening of regional cooperation frameworks between central and eastern European countries and encourages the deployment of international expertise to support recovery and rehabilitation efforts to foster joint disaster management strategies, share best practices and improve transboundary water management;
19. Considers that the EUSF budget should be commensurate with the increasing number and severity of natural disasters across Europe; urges the Commission to increase the budget of the European Solidarity Reserve and the Emergency Aid Reserve; emphasises, furthermore, the importance of ensuring adequate funding for these reserves or their equivalent, in view of the upcoming Commission proposal on the new MFF and the relevant interinstitutional negotiations;
20. Calls on the Commission to further streamline procedures and reduce the time required to process applications for the mobilisation of the EUSF; calls on the Member States and regions to identify bottlenecks and strengthen administrative and operational capacities in order to accelerate the disbursement of EUSF funds; stresses the need for reasonable flexibility when recipient countries and regions face justifiable delays and challenges in applying for and using the allocated funding;
21. Highlights the need to evaluate and maximise the potential of forests, trees and green infrastructure in flood management, climate adaptation and the provision of ecosystem services; notes, for example, that urban trees can absorb rainwater while also improving air quality; calls for increased tree planting in towns and cities and for support for sustainable forest management; stresses that all flood prevention and adaptation measures related to reforestation and agriculture should be informed by the latest scientific knowledge and implemented with full respect for ecological principles;
22. Calls on the Commission to include in the cohesion policy of the 2027-2033 MFF, particularly the European Regional Development Fund, the necessary funds to swiftly rebuild the affected national historic heritage sites, build retention tanks in flood-risk areas, equip first responders and ensure the continuous exchange of knowledge between the Member States;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.