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Plenary sitting

26.6.2013

B7-0324/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the floods in Central Europe
(2013/2683(RSP))

Michael Theurer, Angelika Werthmann, Nadja Hirsch, Marielle de Sarnez
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the floods in Central Europe
(2013/2683(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 3 of the EU Treaty and Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a regulation establishing a European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) (COM(2005)0108) and to Parliament's position thereon of 18 May 2006¹,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper entitled 'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action' (COM(2009)0147), to the Commission Communication on a Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters (COM(2009)0082) and to the Commission Communication 'Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance' (COM(2010)0600),
- having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document entitled 'Regions 2020 – an assessment of future challenges for EU regions' (SEC(2008)2868),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on floods in Central European countries, in particular Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, and in France²,
- having regard to its resolutions of 5 September 2002 on floods in Europe³, of 8 September 2005 on natural disasters (fires and floods) in Europe⁴, of 18 May 2006 on natural disasters (forest fires, droughts and floods) – agricultural aspects⁵, regional development aspects⁶ and environmental aspects⁷, of 7 September 2006 on forest fires and floods⁸, and of 11 March 2010 on the major natural disasters in the autonomous region of Madeira and the effects of the storm 'Xynthia' in Europe⁹,
- having regard to its resolutions of 21 September 2010 on the Commission Communication: A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters¹⁰ and of 27 September 2011 on 'Towards a stronger European disaster response:

¹ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 331.

² OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 128.

³ OJ C 272 E, 13.11.2003, p. 471.

⁴ OJ C 193 E, 17.8.2006, p. 322.

⁵ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 363.

⁶ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 369.

⁷ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 375.

⁸ OJ C 305 E, 14.12.2006, p. 240.

⁹ OJ C 349 E, 22.12.2010, p. 88.

¹⁰ OJ C 50 E, 21.2.2012, p. 30.

the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance'¹ ,

- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas a major natural disaster in the form of torrential rainfall has occurred in June 2013 across Central Europe and especially in Germany, Hungary, Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic, resulting in widespread flooding;
- B. whereas natural disasters and floods are an environmental issue of global concern;
- C. whereas the recent disaster has so far led to the deaths of at least 20 people and the evacuation of tens of thousands from their homes, as well as great human suffering for the families of the victims and for the affected population;
- D. whereas the disaster has caused serious damage, including to property and infrastructure, caused rivers to burst their banks, has destroyed elements of natural and cultural heritage, and has affected the majority of the region's population, with serious and lasting repercussions on living conditions and economic stability;
- E. whereas sustainable reconstruction of the areas destroyed or damaged by the disaster must be undertaken in order to make good their economic and social losses;
- F. whereas the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) was established in order to deal with major national disasters and to provide financial assistance to disaster-stricken states;
- G. whereas the EUSF must complement the public efforts of the beneficiary states, finance measures alleviating non-insurable damage in order to restore the working order of infrastructure, provide temporary accommodation and take preventive measures for the protection of the cultural heritage;
- H. whereas the frequency, severity, complexity and impact of natural and man-made disasters across Europe has increased rapidly in recent years;
- I. whereas widespread flooding caused by soil degradation is a global environmental concern since it affects not only Europe but also the rest of the world, as the recent floods in India have shown;
 1. Expresses its empathy and solidarity with the inhabitants of the regions affected by the disaster, pays its respects and extends its condolences to the families of the victims;
 2. Applauds the relentless efforts made by the volunteers from the affected and neighbouring regions to help the people and reduce the damage in the affected areas;
 3. Takes due note of the possible serious economic effects; calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide support for the areas affected by the economic and social impact of the disaster in the swiftest possible manner;
 4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to review planning, sustainable land use

¹ OJ C 56 E, 26.2.2013, p. 31.

policies and ecosystem absorption capacities in the light of the increased risks of flooding stemming from the way land and habitats are managed;

5. Calls on the Member States to exchange best practice in terms of flood control and drainage infrastructure in order to limit the damage caused by extreme rainfall;
6. Calls on the Member States and regions affected by the disaster to consider the feasibility of long-term economic investment in Member States' disaster-prevention and response policies, and encourages neighbouring Member States, if necessary, to step up their cooperation in dealing with prevention of natural disasters, thereby ensuring that the best possible use is made of EU funds allocated for this purpose;
7. Stresses that soil degradation, driven or exacerbated by human activity, such as inappropriate agricultural and forestry practices or excessive urban development, damages the capacity of soil to continue to perform in full its crucial function of preventing natural disasters;
8. Calls on the Commission, following the submission by national and regional authorities of their respective reconstruction plans, immediately to take steps to ensure that the financial resources required are disbursed as swiftly, effectively and flexibly as possible by the EUSF;
9. Reiterates that a new EUSF regulation, based on Commission proposal (COM(2005)0108), is vitally needed in order to address the problems caused by natural disasters in a more flexible and effective way; urges the Irish Presidency and the Commission to seek a solution without delay in order to continue with the revision of this regulation, with a view to creating a stronger and more flexible instrument which will be able to respond effectively to the new challenges of climate change;
10. Calls on the Member States and regions affected by the disaster to pay particular attention to the sustainability of their respective reconstruction plans and to consider the feasibility of long-term investment in Member States' disaster-prevention and response policies;
11. Calls on the Member States to fulfil the requirements laid down in, and to implement, the EU Floods Directive; urges that flood-risk maps should be taken into account in territorial planning management; stresses that effective flood prevention must be based on cross-border strategies;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to review planning, sustainable land use policies, ecosystem absorption capacities and best practice in the light of the increased risks of flooding stemming from the way land, habitats and drainage systems are managed, and to increase the capacity of flood-control and drainage infrastructure in order to limit the damage caused by extreme rainfall;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States and regional and local authorities in the affected areas.