

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3548/02

by Cristiana Muscardini (UEN), Antonio Mussa (UEN) and Sergio Berlato (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: European Union assistance to tackle the natural disasters which have hit Northern Italy

The Council recently adopted a Regulation establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund¹, with a budget allocation of EUR 1 billion, to be used for the benefit of European Union populations affected by major disasters. Article 2, paragraph 2, second subparagraph of the Regulation makes provision for assistance from the Fund for regions hit by an extraordinary disaster affecting the major part of their population. The recent exceptional floods, combined with landslides and overflowing rivers, which affected a vast expanse of Northern Italy, including the regions of Liguria, Piedmont, Lombardy, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and the Veneto, have destroyed bridges, roads, railway lines and farming areas, together with crops and livestock, forcing thousands of people to be evacuated. Housing has been seriously damaged and initial rough estimates indicate that the necessary rebuilding work may cost about EUR 250 million. In view of all this, can the Commission include these regions of Northern Italy among those to benefit from the exceptional aid envisaged under the new Solidarity Fund for natural disasters?

¹ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3