

**Priority question for written answer P-001692/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Urgent activation of the EU Solidarity Fund for Madeira

1. Forest fires in Madeira in August 2024 have destroyed more than 5 000 hectares of land and caused considerable environmental damage to vast swathes of forest. Those include ecologically important protected areas, such as the UNESCO World Heritage-classified Laurisilva forest and parts of the Madeira Natural Park in the Natura 2000 network.

2. The environmental impact is considerable: local biodiversity is under threat and the habitats of endemic species, such as the Zino's petrel, have been destroyed.

3. The loss of plant cover has left cliffs and rocky escarpments exposed to the elements, which, in the long term, creates an imminent threat of rockfalls and landslides, particularly as the rainy season approaches.

4. Given the huge scale of the damage and Madeira's inherent vulnerabilities as an outermost region, the island faces unique challenges with regard to its financial capacity for dealing with such disasters.

In view of the above:

1. Could the Commission confirm that the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) can be activated to support recovery efforts in Madeira following the August 2024 fires?
2. What technical and advisory support can the Commission provide to the Portuguese Government and Madeira's regional authorities to ensure the region's needs are met quickly and effectively?

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