

Brussels, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2005

## **Commission stands ready to provide financial assistance to help Member States cope with the consequences of this summer's natural disasters**

*The European Commission is following closely the evolution of the floods and the fires currently affecting Europe and stands ready to examine any request for financial assistance under the European Union Solidarity Fund. The Commission is currently processing two requests from Bulgaria and Romania following the Spring floods in the two countries and is in contact with a number of other countries with a view to expected similar requests regarding the most recent natural disasters.*

Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, has been following the situation very closely subsequent to the natural disasters - fires and floods – affecting several areas of Southern and Central Europe and has instructed her services to deal with the various requests for support and assistance as quickly as possible.

*“In such circumstances we have to show our solidarity and offer support to the competent authorities in the Member states and regions who have to deal with very difficult situations affecting people who have sometimes lost everything as a result of a natural disaster”* Danuta Hübner said.

Currently, the Commission is dealing with applications for financial assistance from the EU Solidarity Fund from Bulgaria and Romania relating to the recent floods that have affected these two countries over the past months.

Romania has announced its intention to submit a second application shortly.

As regards the forest fires in Portugal and the floods in southern Germany and Austria, decisions on whether assistance from the Solidarity Fund will be requested will largely depend on the outcome of the damage assessment that is currently underway by the authorities in these countries.

Commissioner Hübner and her services are in contact with the competent authorities in all of the disaster stricken countries. They have offered their assistance in preparing applications should the authorities decide to present one.

For more information on Solidarity Fund see [MEMO/05/287](#) below.