



## EU solidarity at work: Commission offers financial aid to Greece, Poland, Lithuania and Bulgaria following natural disasters

Brussels, 31 May 2018

**Today the Commission is proposing €34 million from the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) for four Member States that were hit by natural disasters in 2017 – Greece, Poland, Lithuania and Bulgaria.**

Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"We are moving from words of support to concrete actions with our new financial aid proposals for Greece, Poland, Lithuania and Bulgaria. Solidarity is one of the founding principles of our Union and the EU Solidarity Fund is one of its most tangible expressions."*

Money from the [EU Solidarity Fund](#) can be used to support reconstruction efforts and cover some of the costs of emergency services, temporary accommodation, clean-up operations and the protection of cultural heritage, in order to relieve the financial burden borne by national authorities in the wake of natural disasters.

The amount of €34 million is divided as follows:

### **€2.5 million for the Greek island of Kos after the July 2017 earthquake**

On 20 July 2017 an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.6 on the Richter scale hit the island of Kos, in the South Aegean region, causing severe damage to parts of the island. The €2.5 million can be used, in particular, to cover the costs of protection measures for monuments and archaeological sites, as well as for the restoration of transport infrastructure.

In June 2017, the Greek island of Lesbos in the Aegean Sea was also hit by an earthquake. In an [earlier proposal](#) adopted in February, the Commission proposed to offer EUSF support worth €1.3 million to Lesbos.

### **€12.2 million for Poland after the August 2017 storms and rainfalls**

Between 9 and 12 August 2017, violent storms and heavy rainfall affected the three Polish regions of Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Pomeranian and Greater Poland, destroying tens of thousands of hectares of forests and crops as well as transport and energy infrastructure. The districts of Toruń and Gdańsk were the hardest hit. The €12.2 million can be used to cover some of the expenses related to clean-up operations in forests, clearing fallen trees from roads and railways, and to help restore damaged infrastructure.

### **Almost €17 million for Lithuania following the 2017 rainfall and floods**

Throughout the summer and autumn of 2017, Lithuania suffered continuous rainfall and floods which damaged the network infrastructure and agricultural lands. The money can be used to help cover the costs of restoring the network and water management infrastructure, including dams and drainage systems.

### **€2.2 million for Bulgaria after the storms and floods of October 2017**

On 25 and 26 October 2017, the region of Burgas, in south-eastern Bulgaria, experienced intense rainfall and violent storms that damaged bridges and roads as well as hospitals and schools. The €2.2 million can help alleviate the costs linked to repairing essential public infrastructure.

### **Background**

Member States hit by a natural disaster can request different kinds of short and longer term EU support. The [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) can be activated during a crisis by a Member State. The Commission has also proposed to strengthen short term EU crisis response through a new system called [RescEU](#).

The [EU Solidarity Fund](#) can be requested by Member States to support long-term reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of a disaster. Today's proposal for EU Solidarity Fund assistance now has to be approved by the European Parliament and the Council. The funding will reach the four Member States shortly afterwards.

**More information:**

[EU Solidarity Fund](#)

[Factsheet – How is EU Solidarity Fund aid calculated?](#)

[National factsheets](#)

[EU Solidarity Fund interventions since 2002](#)

[@EU\\_Regional@CorinaCretuEU](#)

IP/18/3832

Press contacts:

[Johannes BAHRKE](#) (+32 2 295 86 15)

[Sophie DUPIN DE SAINT-CYR](#) (+32 2 295 61 69)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)