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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Ilda Figueiredo, Pedro Guerreiro, Willy Meyer, Helmuth Markov and  
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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on natural disasters (fires and floods)

**European Parliament resolution on natural disasters (fires and floods)**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the extreme and severe drought that occurred in Portugal and Spain has contributed to diminishing the soil humidity, thus increasing the threat of forest fires and their aggressiveness,
- B. whereas at the end of August the burnt-out area covered 240 000 ha in Portugal, more than 120 000 ha in Spain, resulting in the loss of human lives, namely fire fighters, the destruction of houses, farms and factories, severe damage to eco-systems in most of the protected areas, other environmental costs and heavy moral and psychological costs that nothing and no-one will be able to repair,
- C. whereas floods in central European countries like Germany, Austria and Poland have caused very serious damage and loss of human lives,
- D. having regard to the seriousness of the damage caused by the drought, fires and floods to the agricultural sector, to which must be added the negative consequences of the CAP on small and medium farmers and on family agriculture, which contribute to the desertification of the rural world,
- E. whereas other natural catastrophes of similar dimension may unfortunately happen again as a result of climate changes that some Member States are unable to deal with, thus needing European solidarity and aid,
  1. Expresses its profound grief and solidarity to the families of the deceased and to the people living in the affected areas and pays tribute to the dedication of the fire fighters and people who relentlessly fought the fires, often risking their own lives;
  2. Urges the Council to take into account, in the proposal for the forthcoming financial perspective for 2007-2013, the need to create mechanisms in support of the affected population and with a view to the prevention of further large-scale disasters resulting from climate changes, aimed at trying to minimise their consequences;
  3. Calls on the Commission to continue its collaboration with the national authorities in order to support the affected population, minimise the environmental impact of fires and floods, provide public aid to restore the productive potential in the affected areas, seek to re-launch job creation and take the appropriate measures to compensate the social costs inherent in the loss of jobs and other income sources; also urges the Commission to expedite all the relevant Community administrative procedures, namely those relating

to the need to re-programme structural funds and the Cohesion Fund and to make the overly-rigid processing of these funds more flexible;

4. Asks for support to reforest the affected areas, based on respect for their bio-climate and ecological features, and expresses the wish that major importance be given to the rehabilitation of the rural and urban landscape, with due respect for its local specificity;
5. Stresses the need to develop policies relating to the effective prevention of forest fires, reaffirming that the Commission must encourage monitoring and prevention measures, especially in the framework of the 'Forest Focus' Regulation and of the new European Union Forest Strategy, with a view to protecting Community forests from fires and to funding, in particular, appropriate forest fire prevention measures, such as fire separators, forest paths, access points, water points and forest management programmes;
6. Calls on the Commission to carry out thorough research into the tragic consequences of climate change and to include in its proposals efficient prevention and intervention measures, namely in the CAP and in the new EU Forest Strategy, with the aim of supporting rural development as well as small and medium farmers;
7. Urges the Commission to bring forward certain CAP direct aid payments to farmers, in order to take into account the problem of fires (in agriculture) and rapidly enforce Article 87(2) of the EC Treaty, providing adequate financial aid to all sectors affected by this disaster;
8. Takes note of the Commission's Communication on risk and crisis management in agriculture (COM(2005) 74), and urges the Commission and the Council to speedily follow up the communication by ensuring that an effective European-wide protection system is put in place as quickly as possible to protect European farmers from hazards and crises such as those occurring in Portugal and Spain as a result of the present drought and forest fires; considers that a public farming insurance scheme, funded by the EU, should be set up in order to guarantee farmers a minimum income in situations of public calamity, such as droughts, fires and floods;
9. Notes the Commission's statement concerning the use of the Solidarity Fund and insists on the need to apply it to areas and countries affected by natural disasters, if necessary by promoting its urgent amendment;
10. Considers that the recent extreme weather conditions are yet another proof of the negative consequences of climate change and underlines that these extreme conditions once again highlight the need to take ambitious measures at world level to stop climate change; considers that the EU should continue to play a leading role in this process and redouble its efforts in key areas, such as the environment, energy and transport; calls on the Commission to take initiatives in keeping with the Kyoto Protocol undertakings and develop research into the relationship between pollution and climate change;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States affected by the fires, drought and floods.