



10.9.2015

DRAFT REPORT

on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund, in accordance with point 11 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management to provide for payment of advances in the 2016 budget (COM(2015)0281 – C8-0133/2015 – 2015/2123(BUD))

Committee on Budgets

Rapporteur: Lefteris Christoforou

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund, in accordance with point 11 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management to provide for payment of advances in the 2016 budget
(COM(2015)0281 – C8-0133/2015 – 2015/2123(BUD))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2015)0281 – C8-0133/2015),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund¹,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020², and in particular Article 10 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management³, and in particular point 11 thereof,
 - having regard to the results of the trilogue of xxx,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0000/2015),
- A. whereas, in line with Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 which amended Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002, an amount of EUR 50 000 000 is made available for the payment of advances through appropriations in the general budget of the Union
1. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
 2. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its annex, to the Council and the Commission.

¹ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

³ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

ANNEX: DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund for the payment of advances

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund¹, and in particular Article 4a(4) thereof,

Having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management², and in particular point 11 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The European Union Solidarity Fund (the "Fund") aims to enable the Union to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to emergency situations and to show solidarity with the population of regions struck by disasters.
- (2) The Fund is not to exceed a maximum amount of EUR 500 million (2011 prices), as laid down in Article 10 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) N° 1311/2013³.
- (3) Article 4a(4) of Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 foresees that the Fund may be mobilised in an amount up to a maximum of EUR 50 000 000 for the payment of advances, and the corresponding appropriations entered into the general budget of the Union,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

For the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, the European

¹ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3.

² OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

³ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884).

Union Solidarity Fund shall be mobilised to provide the sum of EUR 50 000 000 in commitment and payment appropriations for the payment of advances.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) was set up to enable the Union to respond to emergency situations caused by major natural disasters and to express European solidarity to disaster-stricken regions within Europe. The Fund can provide financial aid to Member States and countries involved in accession negotiations in the event of a 'major natural disaster', i.e. where total direct damage caused by the disaster exceeds EUR 3 billion in 2011 prices or 0.6% of the country's GNI, whichever is the lower. It can also be mobilised in the event of a regional disaster. The conditions for mobilising the EUSF are set out in the relevant basic act (Council Regulation (EC) N°2012/2002), amended in 2014 (Regulation (EU) N°661/2014).

The MFF Regulation for the period 2014-2020¹ (Art. 10) allows the mobilisation of the Fund within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million (2011 prices), over and above the relevant headings of the financial framework.

The current proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council is not linked to a specific disaster. Instead, it aims at entering into the general budget of the Union for 2016 the amount of EUR 50 million in commitment and payment appropriations for the payment of advances in a timely and efficient way in the event of a disaster occurring next year.

This is the direct result of a new provision in the 2014 Amending Regulation² (Art. 4a), strongly defended by the European Parliament, which aims at speeding up the disbursement of aid to affected countries through the payment of an advance before the final award decision has been taken, thus enhancing the Fund's effectiveness. At Parliament's insistence, the final compromise on the Amending Regulation, adopted for the first time under the ordinary legislative procedure, thus included a provision proposing to budget an amount of up to EUR 50 million in commitments and payments each year to ensure the timely availability of budgetary resources.

It should be noted that an advance can be granted at the request of a Member State and following a preliminary assessment of the respective EUSF application by the Commission. The amount of the advance should not exceed 10% of the financial contribution anticipated and not exceed EUR 30 million. The advance is paid without prejudice to the final decision on the mobilisation of the Fund, and unduly paid advances will be recovered from the Member State by the European Commission.

The Rapporteur recalls that the EUSF is not simply another form of EU financial support, but that it also contributes to sending a clear political message of solidarity, while providing much-needed assistance to affected citizens. A prompt response capacity, including through the payment of an advance, will help the Union achieve these objectives.

The Rapporteur recommends, therefore, that these amounts be included in the 2016 Budget.

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

² OJ L 189, 27.6.2014, p. 143.