



30.1.2015

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition 2656/2013 by Silvio Basileo (Italian), on the ‘CASE’ project at l’Aquila

1. Summary of petition

In the wake of the serious earthquake that struck l’Aquila on 6 April 2009, buildings were put up under the ‘CASE’ and ‘MAP’ projects with the aim of providing the displaced with temporary shelter.

Huge sums allocated through a European Commission Solidarity Fund (EUSF) were paid out to build this housing.

The petitioner reports that Civil Protection, acting as the Contracting Authority, has rented out the building roofs for 20 years to private companies for the installation of 148 photovoltaic systems. These produce 5.5 million kwh of electrical energy per year, which is fed into the grid and sold with substantial returns on the test market.

The petitioner objects to this situation, stating that he feels it to be at odds with the social use of funds received from the European Union and requests, inter alia, that the electrical energy in question should be used for consumption by the earthquake victims at social prices.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 24 October 2014. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 30 January 2015

Following the 2009 earthquake in the Abruzzo region the Commission awarded a financial contribution to Italy from the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) amounting to EUR 493.8 million to help cover a part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations that were a consequence of the disaster. The Italian authorities responsible for the implementation of the EUSF contribution (i.e. the National Civil Protection Department) decided to use a major part of the contribution for the housing of the population made homeless by the earthquake. According to the implementation report submitted by the Italian authorities to the Commission, the C.A.S.E. project was the largest project for the accommodation of victims of the earthquake with a total cost of over EUR 810 million. The EUSF contributed EUR 350 million towards the C.A.S.E. project. Accommodation in the C.A.S.E. buildings was provided to the victims of the earthquake free of rent.

Once the construction phase and the intervention of the National Civil Protection Department in Abruzzo ended, the ownership and responsibility for the C.A.S.E. buildings was handed over to the local authorities in L'Aquila.

Council Regulation 2012/2002 establishing the EU Solidarity Fund does not rule out the possibility for a beneficiary State to use an infrastructure part-financed by the EUSF in a way to help cover its operational costs or to help cover other expenditure borne by the State as a consequence of the disaster.

Following the positive assessment of the implementation report on the use of the EUSF in Abruzzo, and after the conclusion of an audit of the intervention by the Commission, the intervention of the EUSF was formally closed on 25 September 2013.

Conclusion

The Commission considers that the position of the Italian authorities does not conflict with the rules governing the intervention of the Solidarity Fund and that it cannot, for this reason, intervene on behalf of the petitioner.