



MEPs discuss humanitarian needs after floods in Pakistan

EU humanitarian aid Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva stressed Pakistan's needs for food, clean water, sanitation and shelter in a debate on Tuesday. MEPs underlined that the EU's disaster response capacity needs to be stepped up.

Ms Georgieva told MEPs that the numbers of people affected by the floods have risen since she debated Pakistan's situation with the Development Committee last week. Twenty million people are now affected, and 12 million are in need of assistance (up from 8 million last week), 1.8 million houses have been destroyed and 3.5 million hectares are under water. Cholera and diarrhoea are starting to spread.

The immediate needs are food, clean water, sanitation and shelter, she said, underlining that the security of humanitarian workers is also an issue. Bringing in the aid speedily is a matter of internal security and stability for Pakistan, she added.

Climate change and disaster readiness

The lesson for the EU is that the impact of climate change is profound. « We should focus on disaster preparedness and improve the country's resilience », she said. As the largest donor, the EU had been in the frontline but not very much present in the media. « The EU's emergency tools' visibility needs to be improved », she concluded.

Filip Kaczmarek (EPP, PL) called the floods in Pakistan "a major tragedy". Mr Kaczmarek thanked Ms Georgieva for the quick, swift and appropriate action by the European Union. He went on to underline that agriculture and transport would be the key sectors in need of reconstruction after the catastrophe. In the event of failure, a food crisis could follow next year, he warned.

Véronique de Keyser (S&D, BE) said that a lot remained to be done to overcome the impact of Pakistan's "tarnished" public image on foreign donors' readiness to tackle its humanitarian needs. She asked the EU's Belgian Presidency to work on an EU rapid response mechanism and appealed for help for Pakistani women. "Some are about to give birth and some need surgery, I appeal to you on behalf of these women", she concluded.

Charles Goerens (ALDE, LU) said the EU and individual Member States had reacted to the catastrophe in an exemplary fashion. However, he added, following the Lisbon Treaty, the artificial division between the EU and its Member States should be ended. "We can still do more", he continued, adding that the EU, as the world's biggest humanitarian fund provider, should become a "genuine world power".

Long-term response

Jean Lambert (Greens/EFA, UK) urged the international community to step up its commitment to Pakistan's long-term reconstruction. She appealed to rich Pakistani land owners to help out, by deferring poor farmers' rent payments for some time.

Sajjad Karim (ECR, UK) said he was proud that the EU and its Member States had mobilized their efforts and stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Pakistan. He added that planning of the medium and long term response should start immediately. Mr Karim advocated adopting a "trade related agenda" to help Pakistanis to rebuild their country themselves.

Press release

Humanitarian aid rapporteur Michèle Striffler (EPP, FR), asked the Commissioner to be ambitious when she presents a proposal in November to strengthen the EU's disaster response capacity. Mrs Georgieva said that her proposal for a "holistic" approach to aid would be based on three pillars: prevention, response and rehabilitation.

Contact :

Thomas DUDRAP

DEVE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 44524

STR: (+33) 3 881 77015

PORT: (+32) 498 98 32 84

EMAIL: deve-press@europarl.europa.eu

Simon DUFFIN

London

EMAIL: Press-en@europarl.europa.eu

EMAIL: simon.duffin@europarl.europa.eu

ADDINFO: (+44) 207 227 43 35

STR: (+33) 3 881 74822

PORT: (+44) 7 786 060 531

Eimear NÍ BHROIN

Dublin

STR: (+33) 3 881 64122

PORT: (+353) 868 559 423

EMAIL: Press-en@europarl.europa.eu

EMAIL: eimear.nibhroin@europarl.europa.eu

ADDINFO: (+353) 1 605 79 32