



Plenary sitting

B10-0057/2024

17.9.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 136(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the devastating floods in central and eastern Europe, the loss of lives and the EU's preparedness to act on such disasters exacerbated by climate change (2024/2817(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

B10-0057/2024

**European Parliament resolution on the devastating floods in central and eastern Europe, the loss of lives and the EU's preparedness to act on such disasters exacerbated by climate change
(2024/2817(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's 2019 Fitness Check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive (SWD(2019)0439),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 February 2021 entitled 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change' (COM(2021)0082),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2020 on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change¹,
- having regard to the Commission guidelines of 26 July 2023 on Member States' adaptation strategies and plans,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2022 on the consequences of drought, fire, and other extreme weather phenomena: increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change²,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2023 on a European Day for the victims of the global climate crisis³,
- having regard to the European Environment Agency (EEA) Report No 1/2024 on the European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 12 March 2024 entitled 'Managing climate risks – protecting people and prosperity' (COM(2024)0091),
- having regard to EEA Report 3/2024 entitled 'Responding to climate change impacts on human health in Europe: focus on floods, droughts and water quality',
- having regard to the final report of the Climate Resilience Dialogue, published in July 2024,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 29 May 2024 entitled 'The evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism – Strengthening EU's emergency preparedness' (COM(2024)0212),

¹ OJ C 445, 29.10.2021, p. 156.

² OJ C 125, 5.4.2023, p. 135.

³ OJ C, C/2024/488, 23.1.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/488/oj>.

- having regard to the statement by the Commission of 18 September 2024 on the devastating floods in Central and Eastern Europe, the loss of lives and the EU’s preparedness to act on such disasters exacerbated by climate change,
 - having regard to Rule 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the average temperature over European land in summer 2024 was the highest on record for the season at 1.54°C above the 1991-2020 average, exceeding the previous record from 2022⁴;
- B. whereas in the past 30 years alone, flooding across Europe has affected 5.5 million people, with almost 3 000 lives lost and more than EUR 170 billion in economic damage; whereas climate change is significantly increasing flood risks across Europe⁵;
- C. whereas the first European Climate Risk Assessment and the Commission communication on managing climate risks – protecting people and prosperity, point out that severe phenomena such as wildfires, droughts and floods are becoming more and more frequent across Europe;
- D. whereas researching and tackling flood risks requires a holistic approach, taking into account various factors including industry, transport, insurance underwriting practices, demographic change, financial liability and other relevant aspects;
- E. whereas effective and coordinated cooperation between rescue services and the rapid cross-border exchange of resources and expertise in response to the floods in Central and Eastern Europe have saved lives and prevented worse damage; whereas coordination at EU level, the pooling of resources and exchanging best practices are essential for successful disaster relief;
- F. whereas significant EU funds have been used to counter flood risks by constructing flood management infrastructure, such as the Racibórz Dolny reservoir in Poland, which played a key role in limiting flood damage in Wrocław;
- G. whereas the ‘Millennium Floods’ of 1997 and 2002 had a combined death toll of more than 150 people and caused over EUR 4 billion in damage; whereas the current floods are less severe, with 16 lives lost so far, but the scale of material and natural damage appears to be more significant in some regions compared to 1997;
- H. whereas, owing to its regional focus, place-based approach, strategic planning and effective implementation model, cohesion policy should play a key role in the prevention of disasters, recovery from symmetric and asymmetric shocks, and the fight against climate change;

General

1. Conveys its deepest sympathy to and solidarity with the victims, their families and the people and communities affected by the ongoing extreme weather events and severe

⁴ Copernicus, ‘[Summer 2024 – Hottest on record globally and for Europe](#)’.

⁵ EU Climate Risk Assessment.

flooding in Central and Eastern Europe, including in Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as those affected by the wildfires in Greece and Portugal;

2. Commends the tireless efforts and commitment of the professional and volunteer fire departments, rescue organisations, volunteers and military in the countries affected by the floods and other natural disasters all over Europe, along with the national, regional and local authorities, and members of the public who risked their lives to save others and protect homes and infrastructure; stresses the fact that the emergency services have played a crucial role in saving lives, evacuating vulnerable areas and protecting property in often difficult conditions, and that their tireless efforts and willingness to act, even at the risk of their own lives, have played a crucial role in containing the disaster;
3. Expresses its deep concern over the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events across the EU, including extreme precipitation and large-scale floods, as well as heatwaves and wildfires; is equally concerned over their serious, direct impacts on human health, livelihoods, housing, infrastructure, agriculture and food security; stresses the urgency of strengthening the EU's collective response to the effects of such adverse weather events through effective civil protection adaptation and mitigation measures in order to protect people, livelihoods and the economy;

Civil protection and disaster relief funding

Civil protection

4. Encourages the affected Member States to request that the EU Civil Protection Mechanism be activated and calls on the Commission and other Member States to respond to all requests for support without delay; welcomes the Ukrainian Government's intention to support the EU with emergency service units;
5. Regrets the budget cuts of EUR 37 million (in commitments) and EUR 154.9 million (in payments) for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU); calls for increased funding to be allocated for the relevant budget lines and in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF);
6. Calls on the Commission to swiftly complete its planned review of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, including its Emergency Response Coordination Centre, in the first year of the new Commission's mandate, and to present concrete measures for further strengthening and developing the EU's collective ability to react to natural disasters, such as the creation of an EU civil protection force for strategic reserves of food, water, medicines and medical equipment, supporting the roll out of mobile-based early-warning tools for citizens, the joint award of new public contracts to modernise civil protection assets, and supporting programmes aimed at providing training, equipment and exchanges of volunteer civil protection services;

Financial support and budgetary instruments

7. Calls for the EU to provide immediate financial and technical assistance to the affected countries, with a focus on sustainable rebuilding efforts and modernising flood prevention systems in high-risk areas;

8. Urges the Commission to explore all possible avenues for accelerating the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund; calls, furthermore, for an emergency funding line to facilitate the swift recovery of affected areas, infrastructure and livelihoods, as well as investments in preventive measures to reduce the impacts of future extreme weather events;
9. Stresses that floods, droughts, wildfires and other extreme weather events create major challenges for farmers and the agricultural sector; calls on the Commission to better address the impact of these climate-related hazards on food production, food security and farmers' incomes;

Regional policy

10. Calls on the Commission to provide technical and financial support to regions disproportionately affected by climate change, including through the cohesion policy instrument, ensuring that no Member State or region is left behind in the efforts to enhance climate resilience and disaster preparedness; highlights the importance of aid and financial resources being made available in the affected areas in as quick, easy and flexible a manner as possible;
11. Strongly supports the strengthening of EU investments linked to regional and local resilience in the next MFF, notably under cohesion policy; acknowledges the need for built-in crisis flexibility in the context of regional funding in order to safeguard additional investments for projects that are damaged or destroyed before being fully implemented; proposes the creation of a dedicated priority axis under cohesion policy for local and regional authorities to address emerging priorities in a bottom-up process, initiated at regional and local level; considers that the key principle should be a tailor-made investment approach geared towards specific needs on the ground; calls for investments in climate adaptation and disaster prevention and preparedness to be guaranteed either through a dedicated policy objective under regional development and cohesion, thematic concentration or a specific enabling condition so as to ensure sustainable investments in local and regional infrastructure, and risk management in less-developed urban and rural areas, including border regions, islands and the outermost regions;
12. Acknowledges that the EU's future cohesion policy should place a further focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation; emphasises the importance of designing and maintaining tailor-made EU programmes and measures for the regions at higher-risk of natural disasters; considers that regional investments through the EU budget should remain under shared management for programming and implementation in order to be able to respond to the needs of Member States, regions and urban, rural and remote areas, especially in view of adapting urban and rural areas to new challenges such as floods;
13. Stresses that differences exist between the Member States when it comes to the competences of their local and regional authorities; calls for an enhanced place-based approach to bring disaster preparedness and management closer to the regional and local level; stresses, furthermore, that the EU's regional policy has been instrumental in developing such capacities and calls for its role to be strengthened; underlines that

technical, financial and administrative capacities are essential in ensuring that managing bodies and local and regional authorities acquire technical knowledge, especially on climate change, that they can use for urban and rural planning and management; is convinced that this will lead to improved design and evaluation of project proposals, more effective allocation of resources and satisfactory budget implementation without a significant risk of decommitments of EU investments;

14. Calls for existing technical assistance and advisory programmes to specifically target smaller municipalities and cross-border, remote and rural areas, as well as the outermost and island regions, to help them face new challenges such as the green transition and climate change; underlines, in this respect, the importance of technical assistance instruments being developed in collaboration between the European Investment Bank and the Commission; calls for targeted support in the form of 100 % EU financing for technical, financial and administrative capacity building, project design and preparation, project pipeline identification and development, and strategic planning capabilities, including planning instruments; calls for Commission initiatives, such as the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, to be more involved in the process of designing and implementing the next generation of disaster preparedness investments; acknowledges that policy and implementation support, geared towards mayors and local authorities, generates significantly better outcomes in the context of policy implementation; calls for an enhanced place-based approach to bring regional EU investment management closer to the regional and local level;

Climate adaptation

15. Calls on the Commission to swiftly present the European Climate Adaptation Plan that it announced as part of the 2024-2029 Political Guidelines for the next European Commission, in order to prepare our societies and adapt to the impacts of climate change, ensure regular science-based risk assessments and support Member States on preparedness, planning and cross-border cooperation;
16. Highlights, in this regard, the need for further urgent investment in flood management and risk prevention measures, including improved early warning systems, real-time monitoring systems, flood management infrastructure and nature-based solutions, and long-term investments in green and blue infrastructure, such as by restoring natural flood plains to give streams and rivers more space;
17. Calls on the Commission, in this regard, to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and speed up approval procedures for the repair and construction of flood management infrastructure and nature-based solutions so that urgently needed protection measures can be implemented without unnecessary delays; stresses that this requires more time-efficient procedures, well-defined responsibilities and a clear focus on the necessary construction measures;
18. Requests that the Commission assess the implementation of existing flood prevention legislation in the EU and the effectiveness of past EU-funded projects, offering recommendations for better use of EU funds;
19. Recommends the use of advanced Copernicus products and remote sensing data to support preventive measures;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.