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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Council and Commission statements

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Helmuth Markov, Francis Wurtz, Salvador Jové Peres, Sylviane H. Ainardi,
Ilda Figueiredo, Efstratios Korakas and Gérard Caudron

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on extraordinary flooding in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and
Slovakia

European Parliament resolution on extraordinary flooding in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the heavy rainfalls in several EU and Central European countries, which led to unprecedented, large-scale flooding in parts of Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia,
 - having regard to the loss of life and the disappearance of dozens of persons, the destruction of or severe damage caused to thousands of houses, companies, roads, railways and other infrastructure in these affected areas, as well as material damage roughly estimated at several tens of billions of Euro,
 - having regard to the huge losses and damage in the agricultural sector, including even the total loss of harvest for the year 2002,
 - having regard to the extensive material damage caused to the historical and cultural heritage, including the Semper Opera House and the Zwinger Palace in Dresden, and the Wörlitzer Park near Dessau (UNESCO world heritage),
- A. whereas the President of the European Commission and the Heads of Government of Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia met in Berlin on 18 August and discussed the extent of the flooding, the expected material damage and possible forms of European solidarity and help for the victims,
- B. whereas the Commission proposed at its meeting of 28 August, a series of measures to provide swift and unbureaucratic support for the people and regions affected by the flooding under the European structural and agricultural funds, the EIB, and through the use of derogations in EU administrative procedures,
- C. whereas the governments of the countries cannot yet give precise figures for the damage caused by the flooding and the Commission cannot assess the actual extent of necessary EU aid,
1. Is deeply shocked by the loss of human lives and the disappearance of citizens, as well as the huge material damage caused, and expresses its deep concern and its solidarity for the people concerned in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia and other affected countries and regions in Europe;
 2. Welcomes the huge joint efforts and congratulates the volunteers, ordinary citizens, fire brigades and disaster units concerned on their untiring work to save the dams along the rivers, to prevent overflowing and to reconstruct devastated areas, which gave an excellent example of practical solidarity;

3. Expresses its growing concern about natural disasters, which are becoming more and more extreme and frequent, due to the global warming of the atmosphere;
4. Supports the short- and long-term proposals made by the Commission at its meeting of 28 August, especially the creation of a permanent instrument for assistance to victims of disasters in EU Member States;
5. Calls for the criteria relating to the application of this fund to be laid down in close cooperation between the Commission and the European Parliament;
6. Requests that, in addition to the unspent money from structural and agricultural funds, fresh money reserved in the EU budget for unpredictable events, totalling € 2.4 billion, be foreseen as part of the EU aid package;
7. Agrees with the EIB's position in favour of providing long-term loans under very favourable conditions; asks, however, for the possibility of granting interest-free loans to be envisaged in specific cases;
8. Calls for the Commission and the governments of the EU Member States to give more priority than ever before in all fields of EU policy to environmental protection, the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and increased efforts to reduce environmentally harmful economic activities in the EU and other parts of the world;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments and governments of the EU Member States and the accession countries.##