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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 Enrique Barón Crespo, Hannes Swoboda, Constanze Angela Krehl, Maria Berger, Juan de Dios Izquierdo Collado, Ralf Walter, Joan Colom i Naval, Paulo Casaca, Olga Zrihen Zaari and Emmanouil Mastorakis

on behalf of the PSE Group

on the floods in Europe

**European Parliament resolution on the floods in Europe**

*The European Parliament,*

- A. having regard to the violent floods which have caused widespread destruction in Europe and Asia in the course of the last weeks,
- B. stressing that the floods affecting numerous European countries are the most serious natural catastrophe in the last ten years in Europe; whereas hundreds of thousands of people had to be evacuated, and many lost their lives,
- C. having regard to possible further developments which may complicate the situation, notably the risks of disease,
- D. considering the damage to homes, infrastructure, agriculture and the cultural heritage, the huge economic and social consequences and the overall economic cost of the floods,
- E. underlining that these events are another confirmation of the need for an ambitious world programme for tackling climate change,
- F. whereas the European Parliament has on several occasions called for the establishment of an appropriate instrument to respond to similar catastrophic situations, notably in its resolution on the 2001 budgetary guidelines (A5-0070/2000) where it requested the Commission 'to pay special attention to structural problems of an economic or social character caused by natural disasters and to look favourably on measures to help solve these problems',
- G. having regard to the Communication and other decisions of the Commission on weather disasters in Europe, adopted on 28 August 2002,
- H. having regard to the Commission's measures to help the affected areas; taking note of the proposals for immediate use of the Structural Funds' performance reserve and of the rural development programmes to tackle the current situation, as well as the use of the pre-accession funds for the applicant countries,
- I. having regard to the Commission's proposal for a new disaster relief fund to be established in the short term,
- J. having regard to the consideration given by the European Investment Bank to long-term loans with exceptional conditions and simplified procedures for businesses affected by the floods,
- 1. Expresses its solidarity and deepest sympathy with the populations affected by the recent catastrophic floods in Europe and Asia and to the families of the numerous persons who

lost their lives; pays tribute to the courage and dedication of the many rescuers whose hard and continuous work helped limit the human and material damage;

2. Welcomes the prompt reaction of the authorities in the Member States concerned when implementing their emergency plans; welcomes the solidarity shown by the EU Member States with the affected regions of both Member States and applicant countries and the praiseworthy help provided to their authorities and rescue services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop further efforts, in particular in preventing the development of epidemics in the areas affected; calls furthermore for greater cooperation in the field of civil protection within the EU;
3. Encourages the Commission to urgently apply Article 87(2) of the EC Treaty with a view to granting appropriate financial aid to all sectors affected by the disaster;
4. Calls on the Commission to rapidly implement an overall rapid-assistance programme based on the principles of solidarity and fair burden-sharing across the EU;
5. Underlines the need for flexibility in the management of the Structural Funds, in order to allow re-programming within the national allocations aimed at better tackling new local situations caused by catastrophes;
6. Underlines the need in future for an EU specific instrument to make available rapid and appropriate financial help in the event of natural catastrophes; stresses that such an instrument should be accompanied by clear criteria and conditions for use together with appropriate funding;
7. Expresses its strong will to take the necessary steps, in close cooperation with the Council and the Commission, to rapidly establish this instrument on the appropriate legal basis, and calls on the Commission to bring forward concrete proposals as a matter of urgency;
8. Calls on the Member States and the applicant countries to assess and if necessary to update their legislation in a sustainable way as regards rivers and water-basin management, spatial planning, infrastructure installation and house building in vulnerable areas so as to prevent similar disasters in the future; calls on the Council and the Commission to take political initiatives for greater EU cooperation in these fields;
9. Considers that these disasters are another demonstration of the need for ambitious world action against climate change, and that the EU should continue to play a leading role in this process; reiterates its view that the Kyoto Protocol remains the central tool in the world strategy to halt climate change; in the light of this, calls again on the US administration to change its policy and participate in the Kyoto process rather than developing its own unilateral climate change programme;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Governments and the national and regional authorities and Parliaments involved, in the EU as well as in the applicant countries concerned, and to the US Government.