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EU Takes Action to Support Climate Disaster Recovery Across Member States

Key policies: *Regulation (EU) 2021/1058, Regulation (EU) 2021/1057, Regulation (EU) 2020/2220, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD, 2014–2022), European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF), Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), EU Civil Protection Mechanism (ECPM).*

In response to the unprecedented climate-related disasters of 2024, the European Commission has proposed amendments to key EU regulations to provide rapid and flexible financial support to Member States affected by severe floods and wildfires. This initiative, announced by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during her visit to Poland on September 19, 2024, ensures EU funds can be swiftly mobilized to assist post-disaster recovery and resilience building.

Addressing Immediate and Long-Term Recovery Needs

The proposed amendments target regulations governing major EU funding instruments, including the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, **Cohesion Fund (CF)**, **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**, and **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**. These changes aim to provide an estimated €18 billion in flexible funding for seven affected Member States: Poland, Romania, Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Portugal, and Slovakia.

This funding will help repair damaged infrastructure, deliver emergency support to impacted citizens, and rebuild communities devastated by the floods in Central and Eastern Europe and wildfires in Portugal.

Key Measures

1. **Increased Liquidity and Co-Financing Flexibility**
   Under the amendments, the ERDF and ESF+ will offer:
   - A 30% pre-financing increase to provide immediate liquidity.
   - Up to 100% EU co-financing for supported measures, removing the need for national contributions.
2. **Rural Development Assistance**
   Changes to the EAFRD framework (2014–2022) will allow Member States to:
   - Provide emergency assistance to farmers, forest holders, and SMEs through 100% EU-funded lump sums.
   - Introduce or enhance measures to restore the production potential of affected farms and forests.
3. **Cohesion Policy Adjustments**
   Up to 10% of existing Cohesion Policy funds earmarked for 2021–2027 can be reallocated for recovery efforts. Member States can transfer funds between the ERDF, CF, and ESF+ to address specific needs.

Broader EU Support Mechanisms

This project is supported by the Interreg Danube Region Programme co-funded by the European Union.

These proposals complement other EU mechanisms, including:

- **European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF):** Offers post-disaster recovery assistance with an annual budget of €1.1 billion for 2024-2027.
- **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF):** Allocates nearly €9 billion to disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation measures.
- **EU Civil Protection Mechanism (ECPM):** Provides immediate crisis relief and emergency support during natural disasters.
- **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP):** Includes an annual agricultural reserve of at least €450 million for market disruptions and climate-related impacts on agriculture.

A Commitment to 'Build Back Better'

The Commission's proposals aim to rebuild affected regions using the 'build back better' approach, promoting sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity in reconstruction efforts. As President von der Leyen stated, "When climate disasters hit, Europe is stronger when it stands together. By injecting liquidity and increasing co-financing, we are making a real difference for people and regions harshly hit by these disasters, while giving Member States the tools to become more resilient and better prepared for future crises."

Next Steps

The proposals will undergo the ordinary legislative procedure in the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Once adopted, Member States can decide how to use these flexibilities and submit programme amendments to the European Commission for review.

With these measures, the EU reaffirms its commitment to standing by its Member States in times of crisis, providing the tools necessary for recovery and resilience-building in the face of increasing climate-related challenges.

For more information, visit the European Commission's webpage on disaster response.

Building a Resilient Future

The Communication reinforces the EU's commitment to the **European Green Deal**, ensuring that every euro spent on prevention delivers long-term benefits for citizens and the economy. By addressing climate risks holistically, the EU aims to protect lives, health, and prosperity while advancing toward climate neutrality.

For more information, visit the European Climate Risk Assessment page.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_5321