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2026/0284 (BUD)

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund to provide assistance to Malta and Italy regarding storm Harry in January 2026 and to Portugal and Spain following the storms in January and February 2026

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

This decision covers the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund (hereinafter referred to as 'the EUSF') in accordance with Council Reglation (EC) No 2012/2002[1] (hereinafter referred to as 'the EUSF Regulation') for an amount of EUR 489 148 220 to provide assistance to Malta and Italy regarding storm Harry in January 2026 and to Portugal and Spain following the storms in January and February 2026.

This mobilisation is accompanied by DEC No 16/2026 that proposes to transfer the necessary amount from the European Solidarity Reserve (hereinafter referred as 'the ESR') reserve line to the EUSF operational budget line, both in commitments and payments appropriations.

2. INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

2.1 Malta – major natural disaster: storm Harry in January 2026

(1) On 10 April 2026, Malta submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following storm Harry in January 2026. On 15 June 2026, Malta submitted a revised application including an updated estimation of the total direct damage in accordance with Article 4(1)a of the Regulation.

(2) Malta applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster occurred on 18 January 2026. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the EUSF Regulation.

(3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.

(4) The Maltese authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at about EUR 132.97 million. This amount exceeds the 'major natural disaster' threshold for Malta of 0.6% of its Gross National Income, which was EUR 121.55 million in 2026. Therefore, the disaster qualifies as a 'major natural disaster' according to Article 2(2) of the EUSF Regulation.

(5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the EUSF Regulation.

(6) Malta requested the payment of an advance pursuant to Article 4a of the EUSF Regulation. On the basis of the preliminary assessment, the Commission concluded that the conditions for paying an advance from the EUSF were met. Therefore, an advance of EUR 931 014 was awarded by Commission Implementing Decision C(2026)5301 of 23 July 2026. The advance was paid to Malta on 4 August 2026.

(7) Between 18 and 21 January 2026, Storm Harry struck the Maltese islands bringing strong winds, heavy rainfall, increased sea levels and wave activity. The event caused widespread damage across Malta and Gozo, affecting many municipalities,

[1] Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/2012/oj).

especially coastal and harbour areas. The storm led to significant disruption to the normal functioning of essential services, such as blocked roads and interrupted transport links. Damage to the agricultural sector, aquaculture and the fishery industry was also recorded.

(8) The Maltese authorities did not request assistance through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

(9) Malta estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the EUSF Regulation at EUR 73.16 million and presented the costs broken down by type of operation. The largest share of cost concerns the restoration of the working order of infrastructure and plants in the fields of energy, water, wastewater, telecoms and transport amounting to EUR 52.08 million. The second largest share of cost concerns securing preventive infrastructure and the protection of cultural heritage amounting to EUR 15.91 million. The third largest share of cost concerns the cleaning up of the disaster-stricken area amounting to EUR 5.09 million. The fourth largest share of cost concerns temporary accommodation and rescue services amounting to EUR 0.08 million.

(10) Malta has transposed the Floods Directive 2007/60/EC through the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks Regulations (S.L. 549.167), under which the Energy and Water Agency acts as the competent authority and has prepared the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, flood hazard and risk maps, and the second Flood Risk Management Plan for the Malta River Basin District.

(11) At the date of submitting the application Malta was not subject to infringement proceedings concerning Union legislation relating to the nature of the disaster.

2.2 Italy – regional natural disaster: storm Harry in January 2026

(1) On 10 April 2026, Italy submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following storm Harry in January 2026.

(2) Italy applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster occurred on 18 January 2026. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the EUSF Regulation.

(3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.

(4) The Italian authorities submitted the application under the 'regional natural disaster' criterion as laid down in Article 2(3) of the EUSF Regulation, which is any natural disaster in a region at NUTS level 2 of an eligible State resulting in direct damage exceeding 1.5% of that region's gross domestic product (GDP). The Italian authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at about EUR 2 995.4 million. According to the third subparagraph of Article 2(3), where the natural disaster concerns several regions at NUTS level 2, the threshold shall be applied to the average GDP of those regions weighted according to the share of total damage in each region. The direct damage expressed as a percentage of the total weighted regional GDP of the Calabria, Sardinia and Sicily regions is 3.256%. This amount exceeds 1.5% of the total weighted regional GDP of the Calabria, Sardinia and Sicily regions.

(5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for

essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the EUSF Regulation.

(6) Italy did not request the payment of an advance.

(7) Between 18 and 21 January 2026, the regions of Sardinia, Sicily and Calabria were affected by Storm Harry which brought about intense and persistent rainfall, strong winds and storm surges. The most severe damage occurred in coastal areas and along rivers, where rising water levels significantly affected several dams. As a result, over thousands of people were evacuated and hundreds of homes were declared uninhabitable. The storm also destroyed public buildings, railway lines, port infrastructure and roads which led to the temporary isolation of some communities.

(8) The Italian authorities did not request assistance through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

(9) Italy estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the EUSF Regulation at EUR 116.66 million and presented the costs broken down by type of operation. The largest share of cost concerns the restoration of the working order of infrastructure and plants in the fields of energy, water, wastewater, telecoms, transport, health and education amounting to EUR 93.01 million. The second largest share of cost concerns securing preventive infrastructure and the protection of cultural heritage amounting to EUR 9.76 million. The third largest share of cost concerns the cleaning up of the disaster-stricken area amounting to EUR 8.67 million. The fourth largest share of cost concerns temporary accommodation and rescue services amounting to EUR 5.22 million.

(10) Italy transposed Directive 2007/60/EC through the Legislative Decree of 23 February 2010, n. 49/2010, regarding the implementation of Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk. Legislative Decree n. 49/2010 states that flood hazard maps and flood risk maps need to be adopted for areas identified according to the same piece of legislation. In addition, on 22 December 2015, a flood risk management plan divided into river basin districts was approved.

(11) At the date of submitting the application Italy was not subject to infringement proceedings concerning Union legislation relating to the nature of the disaster.

2.3 Portugal – major natural disaster: storms in January and February 2026

(1) On 13 April 2026, Portugal submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following the storms in January and February 2026.

(2) Portugal applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster occurred on 22 January 2026. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the EUSF Regulation.

(3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.

(4) The Portuguese authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at about EUR 5 351.97 million. This amount exceeds the ‘major natural disaster’ threshold for Portugal of 0.6% of its Gross National Income, which was EUR 1 703.84 million in 2026. Therefore, the disaster qualifies as a ‘major natural disaster’ according to Article 2(2) of the EUSF Regulation.

(5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the EUSF Regulation.

(6) Portugal requested the payment of an advance pursuant to Article 4a of the EUSF Regulation. On the basis of the preliminary assessment, the Commission concluded that the conditions for paying an advance from the EUSF were met. Therefore, an advance of EUR 65 370 952 was awarded by Commission Implementing Decision C(2026)5300 of 23 July 2026. The advance was paid to Portugal on 4 August 2026.

(7) Between 22 January and 15 February 2026, Portugal experienced a succession of severe storms bringing strong winds, intense precipitation which caused devastating floods and landslides. The storms created significant material damage in public and private infrastructure and destroyed numerous homes. Additionally, essential infrastructure and services in the fields of energy, water, wastewater, transport, healthcare and education were interrupted. The disaster also led to the evacuation of thousands of people and to 18 fatalities.

(8) The Portuguese authorities requested the activation of satellite Earth Observation data from the Copernicus programme to map the flooded areas and the storm impact zone through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

(9) Portugal estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the EUSF Regulation at EUR 1 937.94 million and presented the costs broken down by type of operation. The largest share of cost concerns the restoration of the working order of infrastructure and plants in the fields of energy, water, wastewater, telecoms, transport, health and education amounting to EUR 1 436.61 million. The second largest share of cost concerns the cleaning up of the disaster-stricken area amounting to EUR 341.5 million. The third largest share of cost concerns securing preventive infrastructure and the protection of cultural heritage amounting to EUR 149.56 million. The fourth largest share of cost concerns temporary accommodation and rescue services amounting to EUR 10.27 million.

(10) Portugal transposed Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council through Decree-Law no. 115/2010, which was enacted on 22 October 2010.

(11) At the date of submitting the application Portugal was not subject to infringement proceedings concerning Union legislation relating to the nature of the disaster.

2.4 Spain – major natural disaster: storms in January and February 2026

(1) On 17 April 2026, Spain submitted an application for a financial contribution from the EUSF to finance emergency and recovery operations following the storms in January and February 2026.

(2) Spain applied for a contribution from the EUSF within the deadline of 12 weeks after the first damage caused by the disaster occurred on 23 January 2026. The application contains all the information required under Article 4 of the EUSF Regulation.

(3) The disaster is of natural origin and therefore falls within the field of application of the EUSF.

(4) The Spanish authorities estimate the total direct damage caused by the disaster at about EUR 4 839.53 million. This amount exceeds the ‘major natural disaster’ threshold for Spain of EUR 3 000 million in 2011 prices, which was EUR 4 037.61

million in 2026. Therefore, the disaster qualifies as a ‘major natural disaster’ according to Article 2(2) of the EUSF Regulation.

(5) The total direct damage is the basis for the calculation of the amount of the financial contribution from the EUSF. The financial contribution may only be used for essential emergency and recovery operations as defined in Article 3 of the EUSF Regulation.

(6) Spain requested the payment of an advance pursuant to Article 4a of the EUSF Regulation. On the basis of the preliminary assessment, the Commission concluded that the conditions for paying an advance from the EUSF were met. Therefore, an advance of EUR 37 263 842 was awarded by Commission Implementing Decision C(2026)5374 of 23 July 2026. The advance was paid to Spain on 4 August 2026.

(7) Between 22 January and 14 February 2026, Spain was hit by a succession of severe storms. The storms caused greatest damage in the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia and Extremadura. The intense rainfall associated with the storms led to the evacuation of thousands of people, the closure of over 150 roads and significant structural damage to people’s homes. Additionally, electricity, water and telecommunications infrastructure were cut off for a prolonged amount of time which caused significant economic damaged and left communities isolated.

(8) The Spanish authorities did not request assistance through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

(9) Spain estimated the cost of operations eligible under Article 3(2) of the EUSF Regulation at EUR 1 801.64 million and presented the costs broken down by type of operation. The largest share of cost concerns the restoration of the working order of infrastructure and plants in the fields of energy, water, wastewater, telecoms and transport amounting to EUR 1 585.07 million. The second largest share of cost concerns the cleaning up of the disaster-stricken area amounting to EUR 194.30 million. The third largest share of cost concerns the securing preventive infrastructure and the protection of cultural heritage amounting to EUR 20.93 million. The fourth largest share of cost concerns temporary accommodation and rescue services amounting to EUR 1.34 million.

(10) In Spain, the transposition of Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council took place through Royal Decree 903/2010 of 9 July 2007 on flood risk assessment and management.

(11) At the date of submitting the application Spain was not subject to infringement proceedings concerning Union legislation relating to the nature of the disaster.

2.5 Conclusion

In light of the considerations set out above and following the assessment of the submitted information, the Commission concludes that the disasters referred to in the application submitted by Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain meet the conditions set out in the EUSF Regulation for mobilising the EUSF.

3. FINANCING

The EUSF was established on the principle of solidarity, and accordingly, the Commission applies a progressive approach to its aid allocation. Consequently, the portion of the damage exceeding the threshold for mobilising the EUSF for a ‘**major natural disaster**’ (i.e. 0.6% of

GNI or EUR 3 billion in 2011 prices, whichever is the lower amount, cf. Article 2(2) EUSF Regulation) should give rise to higher aid intensity than the portion of the damage below the threshold. That means that the aid amount for a country affected by a disaster complying with the conditions for a 'major natural disaster' is calculated by adding up two amounts: 2.5% of total direct damage under the threshold and 6% for the part of the total direct damage above the threshold. The rate applied for defining the aid amounts for a '**regional natural disaster**', which remains below the national threshold, is 2.5% of the total direct damage.

This methodology for calculating EUSF aid was set out in the 2002-2003 Annual Report on the EUSF and accepted by the European Parliament and the Council. The EUSF contribution may not exceed the estimated total cost of eligible operations.

Applying the methodology outlined above, the Commission has evaluated the EUSF aid in response to the four applications, submitted by Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain following the storms that occurred in January and February 2026.

The Commission therefore proposes to the budgetary authority to mobilise the following amounts:

Country/ Disaster	**Total direct damage (EUR)**	**Applied disaster threshold (EUR)**	**2.5% of total direct damage** *[up to the threshold for major disasters]* **(EUR)**	**6% of total direct damage above the threshold for major disasters (EUR)**	**Total amount of proposed aid (EUR)**	**Advance paid (EUR)**	**Balance to be paid (EUR)**
Malta – storm *(major disaster)*	132,970,625	121,548,000	3,038,700	685,357	**3,724,057**	**931,014**	**2,793,043**
Italy – storm *(regional disaster)*	2,995,399,358	1,379,823,036	74,884,983	N/A	**74,884,983**	**not requested**	**74,884,983**
Portugal – storm *(major disaster)*	5,351,969,000	1,703,838,000	42,595,950	218,887,860	**261,483,810**	**65,370,952**	**196,112,858**
Spain – storm *(major disaster)*	4,839,525,763	4,037,605,000	100,940,125	48,115,245	**149,055,370**	**37,263,842**	**111,791,528**
				TOTAL	**489,148,220**	**103,565,808**	**385,582,412**

Pursuant to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021-2027[2] (hereafter 'the MFF Regulation') the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) is constituted of two instruments: the European Solidarity Reserve and the Emergency Aid Reserve.

The European Solidarity Reserve with an annual amount of EUR 1 016 million in 2018 prices (corresponding to EUR 1 190.4 million in 2026 prices) will be used for assistance to respond to emergency situations covered by the EUSF. Point 10 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation on budgetary matters and on sound financial management as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[3], lays down the modalities for the mobilisation of the EUSF in the context of the SEAR.

In order to avoid an early depletion of the annual allocation, Article 3(7) of the EUSF Regulation and Article 9(2), second subparagraph, of the MFF Regulation stipulate that 25%

2 OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/2093/oj.
3 OJ C 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28

of the annual EUSF allocation must remain available on 1 October of each year (end-of-year-cushion). In 2026, this amount corresponds to EUR 297.6 million.

In accordance with Article 9(2), first subparagraph, of the MFF Regulation, any portion of the annual amount not used in a given year n may be used up to year n+1. The amount of EUR 21.3 million has been carried over from 2025 to 2026.

Moreover, pursuant to Article 4a(4) of the EUSF Regulation, the amount of EUR 50 million has already been inscribed in the General Budget 2026 (in commitments and payments) for the payment of possible advances. In 2026, the Commission has already paid four advances totalling EUR 133.7 million: to Spain regarding the wildfires in 2025, to Malta regarding Storm Harry in January 2026 and to Portugal and Spain regarding the storms in January and February 2026.

Finally, in line with Decision (EU) 2026/1809 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 July 2026[4] the EUSF will provide assistance to Romania regarding the floods at the end of May 2025, to Cyprus following the wildfires in July 2025 and to Spain following the wildfires in August 2025 for a total EUR 144.1 million, of which the balance to be paid amounts to EUR 111.6 million.

In conclusion, the total available amount before 1 October is EUR 628.1 million (excluding the amount available for advances and end-of-year cushion), which is sufficient to cover the proposed amount for mobilisation.

Available EUSF resources in 2026 (EUR)	
Total annual allocation in 2026	1,190,405,931
Carry-over amount from 2025 incl. unused advances (+)	21,304,355
Amount already used (-)	245,348,099
Total amount available, of which:	**966,362,187**
→ Amount to be used for advances	40,647,932
→ End-of-year cushion, available after 1 October	297,601,483
→ Amount available before 1 October	**628,112,772**
Amount proposed to be mobilised, of which:	489,148,220
→ Balance to be paid	**385,582,412**
Remaining amount for future applications incl. advances and end-of-year cushion	**580,779,775**

[4] OJ L, 2026/1809, 21.7.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2026/1809/oj.

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THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund[1], and in particular Article 4(3) thereof,

Having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[2], and in particular point (10) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) The European Union Solidarity Fund ('the EUSF') aims to enable the Union to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to emergency situations in order to show solidarity with the population of regions struck by major or regional natural disasters or major public health emergency.

(2) The EUSF is not to exceed the ceilings laid down in Article 9 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093[3].

(3) On 10 April 2026, Malta submitted an application to mobilise the EUSF following storm Harry in January 2026.

(4) On 10 April 2026, Italy submitted an application to mobilise the EUSF following storm Harry in January 2026.

(5) On 13 April 2026, Portugal submitted an application to mobilise the EUSF following the storms in January and February 2026.

(6) On 17 April 2026, Spain submitted an application to mobilise the EUSF following the storms in January and February 2026.

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[1] OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/2012/oj.

[2] OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2020/1222/oj.

[3] Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/2093/oj).

(7) Those applications meet the conditions for providing a financial contribution from the EUSF, as laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002.

(8) The EUSF should therefore be mobilised to provide a financial contribution to Malta, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

(9) In order to ensure that the Union financial assistance can be made available as rapidly as possible to the Member States affected and to avoid any delay in the mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund, this Decision should enter into force as a matter of urgency on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and should apply from the date of its adoption,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

For the general budget of the Union, the European Union Solidarity Fund shall be mobilised as follows in commitment and payment appropriations in relation to natural disasters:

(a) the amount of EUR 3 724 057 shall be provided to Malta following storm Harry in January 2026;

(b) the amount of EUR 74 884 983 shall be provided to Italy following storm Harry in January 2026;

(c) the amount of EUR 261 483 810 shall be provided to Portugal following the storms in January and February 2026;

(d) the amount of EUR 149 055 370 shall be provided to Spain following the storms in January and February 2026.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from [*the date of its adoption*].

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament *For the Council*

The President *The President*