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Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 as regards additional assistance and further flexibility to outermost regions affected by severe natural disasters and in the context of cyclone Chido devastating Mayotte

(COM(2025) 190 final – 2025/0104 (COD))

(C/2025/4213)

Rapporteur: **Joël DESTOM**

Referral	Council of the European Union, 2.5.2025 European Parliament, 13.5.2025
Legal basis	Articles 42, 43(2) and 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
Section responsible	Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion
Adopted in section	5.6.2025
Adopted at plenary	18.6.2025
Plenary session No	597
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	203/0/3

1. Conclusions and recommendations

1.1. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) welcomes the European Commission's proposal, which fully acknowledges the structural vulnerability of the outermost regions (ORs) to natural disasters and climate change by considering flexibility measures to take into account climate and humanitarian emergencies in these regions, particularly in Mayotte.

1.2. The EESC supports the targeted amendments to Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 ([1]), which aim to:

— ensure continuity of support under the programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity (POSEI) during reconstruction, even when productive activity is absent;

— remove the 10 % ceiling for the redeployment of funds under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) for Mayotte;

— postpone the deadline for selecting beneficiaries until after 30 June 2025.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006 (OJ L 78, 20.3.2013, p. 23).

1.3. Nevertheless, as already highlighted in its previous opinion ([2]), the EESC calls on the Commission and the Member States to:

— ensure that the reassignment of funds is not carried out to the detriment of structural rural development projects. Emergency support must be designed to complement and not replace long-term resilience strategies;

— include a provision in the regulation encouraging the use of nature-based solutions in the post-disaster reconstruction phase;

— maintain rigorous and transparent annual monitoring of the commitments undertaken by beneficiaries.

1.4. The EESC urges the European Commission to work closely with the Member States, local authorities and civil society organisations to make the most effective and rapid use of the possibilities to support the regions affected. Civil society organisations, workers, SMEs and NGOs have been severely affected by the natural disasters and a substantial share of the funds must be directed to them so that they can recover from the severe damage ([3]).

1.5. In addition, the EESC recommends that:

— a procedure for the rapid recognition of natural disasters be formalised at EU level;

— a dedicated EU climate disaster fund be considered in order to respond effectively to major crises, without compromising the structural policies financed by the EAFRD or the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This fund, complementary to the European Solidarity Fund, would guarantee the sustainability of future support in a context of increasing major risks ([4]);

— adaptations to the regulation be part of the broader strategic framework of the Long-Term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas (LTVRA), ensuring coherence between emergency aid, territorial resilience and sustainable rural development.

1.6. The EESC is of the view that the EU needs a new, stable and solid funding mechanism which must be adaptive, flexible and ready to respond to new and emerging crises in the years and decades to come. It is crucial that the functioning of this mechanism, with its greater focus on swift and urgent responses, be coherent with the EU's overarching climate, environmental and energy policies, which in the long run will reduce reliance on emergency responses and protect human as well as natural resources ([5]).

1.7. Lastly, the EESC calls for more coordination between the various EU disaster responses and for the implementation of a structured prevention framework, including a one-stop shop for ORs and a climate/OR early warning mechanism, as well as simplified administrative procedures for granting aid. These measures should enable requests made in the event of disasters to be dealt with more quickly, providing a rapid response that is adapted to the needs of the damaged regions.

2. **Background to the opinion**

2.1. The archipelago of Mayotte was severely hit by cyclone Chido in December 2024 and later by storm Dikeledi in January 2025. These weather events caused unprecedented damage: loss of life, destruction of vital infrastructure and the collapse of all forms of production.

([2]) Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee – Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2020/2220 as regards specific measures under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to provide additional assistance to Member States affected by natural disasters (COM(2024) 495 final — 2024/0274(COD)) (OJ C, C/2025/775, 11.2.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/775/oj).

([3]) Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee – Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council RESTORE – Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 (COM(2024) 496 final — 2024/0275 (COD)) (OJ C, C/2025/774, 11.2.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/774/oj).

([4]) This dedicated fund should be designed in line with the EU's international commitments, in particular those undertaken during COP 28, as mentioned in the EESC opinion (point 1.5) (OJ C, C/2025/775, 11.2.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/775/oj).

([5]) OJ C, C/2025/774, 11.2.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/774/oj.

2.2. This double disaster has highlighted the heightened vulnerability of ORs to climate change, made worse by structural weaknesses such as their island nature, remoteness, the very low level of economic diversification or even the prevalence of monoculture.

2.3. In this context, the Commission's proposal aims to introduce targeted flexible measures to the POSEI Regulation, allowing EU funds to be mobilised in the best possible way in the interest of the damaged regions.

3. **General comments**

3.1. The EESC recognises that the proposal is targeted and justified. It constitutes a practical response to an emergency situation in an EU outermost region.

3.2. The EESC welcomes the explicit recognition by the Commission of the limitations of the classic *force majeure* principle and the inclusion of an extended and flexible timeframe for reconstruction in the POSEI Regulation.

3.3. The EESC is concerned about how the recurrence and the magnitude of such phenomena could affect the financing of ad hoc emergency measures, at the expense of medium and long-term development strategies.

3.4. The EESC calls for a comprehensive, anticipatory and structured approach to the territorial resilience of the ORs, based on the three elements of prevention, adaptation and reconstruction ([6]).

4. **Specific comments**

4.1. With regard to the commitment by each beneficiary of the POSEI, the EESC supports the idea of a simplified, formal commitment to restore production. It strongly suggests introducing qualitative monitoring and technical support tools, particularly for small, or even very small farms, to maintain rigorous and transparent annual monitoring of the commitments undertaken by beneficiaries.

4.2. As regards the removal of the EARDF ceiling for Mayotte, the EESC believes that the measure is necessary and proportionate. It recommends that the impact on the various projects be communicated very widely to people and to organisations that are part of organised civil society.

4.3. With regard to the solutions chosen for reconstruction, the EESC recommends including an explicit provision in the regulation that encourages the use of nature-based solutions as part of post-disaster reconstruction methods.

Brussels, 18 June 2025.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Oliver RÖPKE

([6]) See the EESC opinion (point 1.6) (OJ C, C/2025/775, 11.2.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/775/oj).