

EN

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Answer given by Ms Ferreira
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.8.2023)

The Commission is aware of the high levels of sargassum and their impact in some outermost regions. The 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 cohesion policy programmes can support related actions, including regional cooperation within INTERREG Caribbean. Member States may also support related projects¹ under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund² (EMFAF) in so far as they align with the specific objectives of the fund and the French national EMFAF programme.

1. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism can respond to emergencies with the activation of the Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS), dispatching environmental experts and coordinating assistance. France has already activated CEMS for algae blooms in French Guiana³ and the Antilles islands⁴ in the past.

2. The EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF)⁵ can be activated at the request of the concerned Member State in case of major natural disasters. It is considered a major disaster under the remit of the EUSF when the total direct damage exceeds the defined thresholds. The application needs to be submitted within 12 weeks after the first occurrence of damage as a consequence of a natural disaster or official action against the emergency. Nevertheless, the requirements under the EUSF-Regulation are not met in the case of an environmental problem unfolding over many months and years.

3. Concerning the creation of a sargassum emergency fund, the current rules do not allow creating a new fund from unused 2014-2020 cohesion policy resources.

¹ Under Specific Objectives 2.1 (aquaculture), 2.2 (marketing and processing) and 3.1 (community-led local development) could be relevant. Operations are selected by the managing authority based on national eligibility rules.

² [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1139 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation](#)

³ <https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/ems/algae-bloom-french-guiana>

⁴ <https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/list-of-components/EMSR282>

⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3) as amended by Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 May 2014 (OJ L 189, 27.6.2014, p. 143) and by Regulation (EU) 2020/461 of the European Parliament and the Council of 30 March 2020 (OJ L 99, 31.3.2020, p. 9).