

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNITY HELP FOR FRIULI

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS REPAIRING
THE DAMAGE CAUSED TO AGRICULTURE IN FRIULI
BY THE EARTHQUAKE OF MAY 1976

(Submitted by the Commission to the Council)



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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. On 6 May 1976 a severe earthquake occurred in Friuli. Over 1,000 lives were lost. It will not be possible to measure the material damage with any precision until the most essential rescue and reconstruction work is complete. Agriculture is important in the economy of the region of Friuli - Venezia - Giulia. The damaged provinces are Udine (412,474 hectares of UAA, 64.2% of the total area) and Pordenone (180,126 ha, 28%). Agriculture there mainly consists of the production of cereals, meat, milk, wine, fruit and vegetables.
2. The telex of 20 May 1976 from the Ministry of Agriculture in Rome listed the following losses :
 - 10,000 rural dwellings destroyed completely and 4,000 partially;
 - 8,000 cattle sheds destroyed and nearly 20,000 animals lost;
 - farm machinery worth 10 milliard lire, stocks of goods worth 5 milliard, raw materials (seeds, fertilizer etc...) worth 1 milliard;
 - 7 pig-houses and 1 cooperative pig farm;
 - 69 collective harvesting, processing and marketing establishments (cheese-making and wine cooperatives, maize drying plants, etc.);
 - 500 km of farm roads in the hills and mountains;
 - 30 km of rural electricity network;
 - 40 km of rural aqueducts;
 - irrigation system and hydraulic works worth 2 milliard lire;
 - public land development works, land improvement schemes in the mountains and forests worth 33 milliard.

This is not an exhaustive list.

The 29 most severely damaged communes are :

in the Province of Udine :

Artegna, Buia, Cavazzo Carnico, Colloredo di Montalbano, Feletto Umberto, Forgaria, Gemona, Lusevera, Magniano in Riviera, Majano, Moggio Udinese, Montenars, Osoppo, Pradielis, Nimis, Ragogna, Resia, S. Daniele del Friuli, Sedegliano, Tarcento, Tavagnacco, Trasaghis, Venzona;

in the Province of Pordenone :

Castelnuovo del Friuli, Fanna, Pinzano al Tagliamento, Sequals, Travesio, Vito d'Asio.

Clearly, it is beyond the means and capability of the farmers to repair such severe damage by their own efforts, particularly since of the 29 communes eleven as regards their entire territory and six as regards part are on the list of less-favoured areas within the meaning of Article 3(3) of Council Directive 75/268/EEC of 28 April 1975 on mountain and hill farming and farming in certain less-favoured areas. The Community is therefore called on to show solidarity with part of the population that has suffered so much from a natural disaster.

3. Once before, at the time of the disastrous floods in Italy in 1966, the Community adopted a special measure to assist distressed agricultural areas under Commission Regulations Nos. 206/66/EEC of 7 December 1966 on the E.A.G.G.F. contribution towards repairing the damage caused by disastrous floods in certain regions of Italy during the autumn of 1966¹ and 17/67/EEC of 27 January 1967².

Under these Regulations provision was made for aid from the Guidance Section of the E.A.G.G.F. for reconstruction and the improvement of the means of production and the marketing of agricultural produce. Ten million units of account were granted for 29 individual projects submitted; the decision with respect to the substance of each case was taken at most six weeks after receipt of the relevant data by the Commission.

4. To repair the damage caused by the earthquake it is appropriate to adapt the aid system which has already been applied.

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¹O.J. No 229, 10.2.1966, p. 3869/66

²O.J. No 18, 28.1.1967, p. 300/67

Through the Italian authorities, the victims may forward to the Commission projects for the restoration and improvement of:

- production conditions in agriculture or on farms,
- facilities for marketing or processing agricultural produce.

For projects promoting economic recovery in agriculture, the Community may grant aid up to 45% of the amount invested. The beneficiary of the project must, at a level lower than that required by Regulation No. 17/64/EEC, participate in the financing and the Italian Republic is called on to make up the difference between the total cost of the investment and the respective contributions of the beneficiary and the Community.

The Commission may take a rapid decision on granting aid; it is provided that the decision will be taken at the latest six weeks after receipt of the information needed for the decision. Therefore, to hasten the Commission decision, provision is made for an exception to the procedure for consulting the Standing Committee on Agricultural Structures. Although the Commission will try to consult the Committee before taking a decision, in urgent cases the Commission may take a decision without waiting for the Committee's opinion; in such cases the Commission is obliged to inform the Committee of its decisions as soon as possible.

The simple decision procedure must be combined with a system of submitting applications for aid that takes account of the fact that in the present circumstances it is sometimes difficult to make up the files and that speed is essential so that aid can be given as quickly as possible. Therefore, the Commission intends to lay down conditions of application that are as flexible as possible and to ask only for the details that are absolutely necessary for a decision.

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On the other hand, at the time of payment of the aid, effective control of planned expenditure is possible under Commission Regulation No 99/64/EEC of 24 July 1974¹ on procedures for implementing decisions by the Guidance Section of the EAGGF to grant aid. Obviously the payments should be made as soon as possible, priority being given to projects concerning the repair of earthquake damage.

5. In addition to the regulations based on Article 43 of the Treaty, provision should be made for a supplementary budget.

6. In view of the need to ensure that Community aid benefits the victims of the earthquake as soon as possible, steps should be taken to see that applications for assistance reach the Commission before long. The Italian authorities have signified their agreement to this measure.

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¹OJ 71, 6 April 1974, page 117/74

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Council Regulation (EEC) No /76
of June 1976

On the Community contribution towards repairing the damage caused to agriculture by the earthquake of May 1976 in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Articles 43 and 209 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission;

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament;

Whereas the Friuli region was seriously damaged by an earthquake in May 1976; whereas the disaster-stricken communes are essentially agricultural;

Whereas the damage to agriculture is so serious that the farmers cannot repair it by their own means alone;

Whereas the Community should accordingly provide effective and rapid aid for the restoration and improvement of the agricultural potential of the stricken region;

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

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Article 1

Within the limits of the funds allocated for this purpose in the Budget, the Community shall contribute, on the conditions laid down in Article 2 and in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 3, to the restoration and improvement of:

- production conditions in agriculture or on farms;
- plant for the marketing or processing of agricultural products, which are required in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region as a result of the damage caused by the earthquake of May 1976.

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Article 2

1. The following provisions of Council Regulation 17/64/EEC on the conditions for giving aid from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund¹ are to apply by analogy to the Community aid provided for in Article 1:

- Article 13
- Article 14, paragraphs 1(c) and 1(a) and (c)
- Article 17
- Article 20, paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 6
- Article 21, paragraph 2
- Article 22

Furthermore, the following special conditions are laid down for aid from the Community:

- (a) the project must help to permit the economic recovery of the agricultural sector in the light of the need to increase agricultural productivity, in accordance with Article 39(1)(a) of the Treaty, or to improve the outlets for agricultural products;
- (b) for a given project:
 - the subsidies granted by the Fund may not exceed 45% of the investment made;
 - the beneficiary of the restoration or improvement operation must participate in the financing; such financial participation must represent not less than 10%, if the restoration or improvement relates to plant for the marketing or processing of agricultural products;
- (c) the Italian Republic shall undertake to cover the financing plan, account being taken of the aid from the Community and the participation of the beneficiary.

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¹O.J. No 34 of 27.2.1964, p. 586/64

Article 3

The following procedure is laid down for the aid provided for under Article 1:

- (a) applications for aid may be submitted to the Commission at any time, up to 31st October 1976 at the latest; however, applications relating to farm investments can be submitted up to 31st December 1976.
- (b) the Commission must take all necessary measures to ensure that a decision on the substance of each individual case is taken not later than six weeks following receipt of the information required for its decision;
- (c) the Commission shall consult, insofar as possible, the Standing Committee on Agricultural Structures on the substance of draft decisions at the periodical meetings of that Committee, although such consultation may not prevent the adoption of the decisions within the period laid down in (b); failing this, the Commission shall inform the Committee as soon as possible of the decisions which it has taken.

Article 4

The following provisions of the financial regulation of 25th April 1973¹ shall apply by analogy to the funds allocated in the Budget to the financing of the actions provided for by the present Regulation:

- Article 6, paragraph 5
- Article 40, paragraph 2
- Article 114

Article 5

This Regulation shall enter into force on the third day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

The President

¹O.J. No. L116, 1.5.1973