

Statement by Commissioner Crețu on the French authorities' request for aid from the European Solidarity Fund

Within the first few hours of the devastating Irma and Maria hurricanes hitting the Caribbean, the European Union expressed its solidarity by mobilising its emergency response instruments and offering aid for reconstruction in the longer term with the support of European funds.

We have now received a request from the French authorities for aid from the EU Solidarity Fund to help with reconstruction on Guadeloupe and Saint Martin in particular; French Overseas Minister Annick Girardin will today meet my colleague, Pierre **Moscovici**, to hand him the request in person.

I welcome this request, since once analysed it will allow us to assist the people of Saint Martin by providing financial aid to help restore infrastructure and public services and to cover emergency and clean-up costs.

Europe's support will soon be put to work on the island. This is the promise I made to Daniel Gibbs, President of the Collectivity of Saint Martin, at the Conference on the Outermost Regions in October, where we presented our new strategy for a stronger partnership with these regions. This promise will be kept, since although these overseas regions may be geographically distant from the European continent, never have they been so close, so integrated, or so European.

However, we also realise that these regions are part of a special neighbourhood and that Saint Martin itself is one of a pair, since it shares its island, and therefore its destiny, with the Dutch territory of Sint Maarten.

Saint Martin and Sint Maarten will recover together. My colleague Commissioner **Mimica**, responsible for development, last week announced an investment package to support the reconstruction and economic revival of the Caribbean countries affected by the disaster, including Sint Maarten.

Furthermore, in December we will announce how our inter-regional cooperation programmes, known by the name of Interreg, can also make a contribution, in particular the specific programme linking Saint Martin and Sint Maarten.

The European Union stands side-by-side with those who lost everything, including their dreams, in the disaster. They can count on the sincere and unfailing support of the EU for the reconstruction work and for the rebuilding of their lives.

For further information:

[EU Solidarity Fund](#)

[Press release – EU supports recovery and resilience in the Caribbean region with €300 million](#)

[Interreg Saint-Martin / Sint-Maarten Programme](#)

[Interreg Caribbean Programme](#)

[Press release: The outermost regions and the EU: a privileged, renewed and strengthened partnership](#)