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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (first reading) - Adoption of the legislative act (LA + S) = Statements

Statement by Malta and Cyprus

Several Member States and MEPs have highlighted that certain island and outermost regions have specific characteristics, both geographically and in terms of the economic dependence caused by their distance, remoteness, and small markets, which make them particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters. In these regions, any natural disaster has an aggravated impact and there is a greater need for assistance.

Malta and Cyprus support that special treatment for certain type of regions is well safeguarded and recall that Article 174 of the TFEU, the related Declaration (33) and paragraphs 44 and 51 of the European Council Conclusions of 7-8 February 2013 recognise the specific character of Island Member States.

Malta and Cyprus consider that the regional threshold exists to facilitate the ability of smaller regions to access the Fund and our position remains that the situation of Island Member States such as Malta and Cyprus, and the vulnerability of such territories to natural disasters should be reflected in the legislative proposal.

Statement by Hungary

Hungary shares the view that the functioning of the European Union Solidarity Fund should be improved and therefore certain amendments to the *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund* constitute important developments. Nevertheless, Hungary wishes to express its conviction that there is a crucial need for the comprehensive review of the European Union Solidarity Fund. Hungary firmly believes that it is necessary for the Union to have at its disposal a sound and flexible instrument to allow it to show solidarity and send a clear political signal as well as imminent and genuine assistance to citizens affected by major emergency situations irrespective of the nature of the disaster be it a natural catastrophe or an industrial accident or crime.

Hungary wishes to point out the serious loophole in the European legislation as the existing EU legislation fails to properly address the financial implications of such events. The potential scale, the long-term environmental, human and economic effects, as well as the transboundary nature of industrial accidents and man-made disasters call for a review of the existing legislative framework. Hungary emphasizes that in the course of the review process the broadening of the scope of the European Union Solidarity Fund to industrial disaster and crime should be considered. Another option concerns environmental liability and proposes to establish a European Industrial Disaster Risk-sharing Facility as already raised at the meeting of the **Environment Council** on 19 December 2011 (18596/11 ENV 972 IND 179 PROCIV 170). Without prejudice to the ‘polluter pays principle’ as established by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Hungary considers that the co-legislators should engage themselves to find the proper solutions to these significant controversies without further delay. Hungary regrets that the present Proposal failed to address these important challenges.