

# The effectiveness of the European Union Solidarity Fund

An evaluation of the earthquake in L'Aquila 2009 and the flood in Greece 2015



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19 September, 2017

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## Executive Summary

The European Union Solidarity Fund is a financial support instrument, which supports member states of the European Union and countries applying for accession with recovery costs after they were affected by a natural disaster. The Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 established the Fund in November 2002; it is implemented under the cohesion policy and directly binding in all member states. After the affected state applies for funding from the European Commission and the institution recognizes the case either way as a regional or major disaster, the affected state has 18 months in order to spend the grant for emergency and reconstruction operations according to the implementation agreement. A new Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 was implemented in May 2014, which improved the effectiveness of the Fund.

This dissertation focused on the effectiveness of the European Union Solidarity Fund. The objective of this research was to find out how effective the Fund is in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union. This was done by an evaluation and comparison of two case studies, the earthquake in L'Aquila in 2009 and the flood in Greece in 2015. To this end, the central research question was as follows: *"How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?"* Furthermore, the implementation measures of the Fund and the accomplishments of the reform were researched.

The research question was answered through obtained data on the implementation measures of the Fund and by applying an ex-post evaluation of the two case studies. Besides, data was collected by conducting two interviews with experts in the field of the Fund and the field of criminology. Based on the information of the experts and the secondary data, the results showed, that the Fund is effective for supporting affected member states in emergency and short-term reconstruction operations of up to 18 months. Nevertheless, the long-term reconstruction is the responsibility of the member state.

Therefore, among other things, it was recommended, that the European Union Solidarity Fund should be altered by the European Commission and other institutions of the European Union to provide funding for durable long-term reconstruction aid (more than 18 months). Moreover, the European Commission should enhance its role as a supervisor in order to improve the effectiveness of the Fund.

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## List of Acronyms

JRC	European Commission's Joint Research Centre
EU	European Union
MS	Member State(s)
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union
The Fund	European Union Solidarity Fund
GNI	Gross National Income
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECA	European Court of Auditors
DNA	Direzione nazionale antimafia / National Anti-Mafia Department
CNN	Cable News Network
RISK	Risk and Resilience programme
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
ESF	European Social Fund
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to the topic

According to the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), natural disasters worldwide and in the European Union (EU) are increasing dramatically, as an effect of climate change (EU JRC, 2016). As stated by the European Environment Agency, between 1998 and 2009, technological accidents and natural hazards affected more than 11 million people and triggered nearly 100,000 fatalities in Europe (European Environment Agency, 2010). According to Mysiak, the consequence of the increasing number of natural disasters and, economic damages are inflating, leading to a rise in social distress (Mysiak, 2015).

Eventually, the EU and its Member States (MS) need to be prepared and organized for a natural hazard to happen at any moment. Risk prevention is therefore of great importance, as well as crisis management in case of a natural disaster. Financial aid plays a significant role in providing reconstruction aid, but even more important is the solidarity between the MS during turbulent times caused by natural disasters. Solidarity was one of the main characteristics the EU was founded on; with the idea of an economic and political dependency between the countries. Robert Schuman announced in the Declaration of 9<sup>th</sup> May 1950 that: "*Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.*" (Foundation Robert Schuman, 2017).

Article 222 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) lies down the solidarity clause:

*"The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster."*

(Article 222 (1) Treaty of Lisbon)

Based on the solidarity clause, the European Union Solidarity Fund (the Fund) was established in 2002 for transnational support in disaster recovery, implemented under cohesion policy (Mysiak, 2015). According to EU Commissioner Haase, the Fund enables the EU to provide effective support to MS or an accession country to deal with the effects of a major natural disaster (Haase, 2016). Hahn, Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, states that the Fund is a financial instrument to support MS and regions with financial burdens and can, therefore, help to cover costs of emergency operations from the first day of the disaster (Hahn, 2017).

## 1.2 This research

This research explores the effectiveness of the Fund; the main research question is: *How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?* Therefore, this research attempts to find out if the Fund is effective enough to financially help the affected MS to cope with natural disasters. It is believed that this specific research will help to discover if there is still room for improvement and what needs to be changed in order to improve the Fund for MS in need of financial support during natural disasters. The number of natural disasters inside of the EU is increasing, thus, research on the effectiveness of the Fund is necessary. This research includes two case studies to evaluate the effectiveness; they have been selected due to their difference because both cases show two different natural disasters. The first case is an earthquake and a major disaster, while the second case study is a flood and considered as a regional disaster. Furthermore, the cases occurred at a different point in time. The earthquake in L'Aquila in 2009 demonstrates that the Fund still needed improvement, while the flood in Greece in 2015 happened after the reform of the Fund in 2014.

In order to answer the central research question, the first sub-question is: *What are the implementation measures of the European Union Solidarity Fund?* The answer to this sub-question describes the background of the Fund and how it is implemented. The second sub-question is: *How much impact has the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU (evaluation of the policy cycle)?* The aim of this sub-question is to evaluate the Fund on the basis of two case studies, the earthquake in L'Aquila 2009 and the flood in Greece in 2015. The third sub-question is: *Have the amendments of the Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of May 2014 improved the European Union Solidarity Fund?* This sub-question has a comparative nature and discusses the difference between the Fund before and after the reform.

### 1.3 Reader's guide

This research consists of several chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the introduction. In chapter 2, the literature review provides important definitions, theories, general information on the case studies, as well as relevant perspectives of authors for researching the topic of this research. In Chapter 3, the research methods are explained in detail. Chapter 4 shows the findings of the first sub-questions and an analysis. In Chapter 5, the findings of the second sub-question are presented, including the first case study and an analysis. Chapter 6 demonstrates the findings to the second sub-question as well, including the second case study and an analysis. Chapter 7 provides the findings of the third sub-question, followed by an analysis. Chapter 8 shows the conclusion of the research and the answer for the central question is provided. Chapter 9 presents the recommendations for future policymakers involved with the Fund.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

The Fund has been analyzed multiple times by scholars. For example, Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer, and Mechler researched the legitimacy, viability, and efficiency of the Fund in 2010 (Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer & Mechler, 2010). Also, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills assessed the effectiveness of the European Social Fund in 2013 (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013). However, not much research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the Fund. Especially since it has been reformed, far less research has been performed by scholars. Therefore, two case studies were used in order to assess the Fund, before and after its reform. The following paragraphs elaborate on definitions, general information on both cases, the most relevant theories, the implementation and evaluation phase of the policy cycle, as well as general assumptions. These topics are included in order to be able to conduct the research on the effectiveness of the Fund and answer the main research question of this dissertation.

### 2.2 Definitions

For this research, it is important to clarify certain definitions. These are *effectiveness*, *natural hazard*, *natural disaster*, *evaluation*, and *policy actor*. They will be defined in the following sections.

#### 2.2.1 Effectiveness

As stated in the book “Policies and Policy Processes of the European Union”, by authors, Buonanno and Nugent, effectiveness measures the achievement of objectives. In other words, effectiveness means to detect the extent to which for example a policy, fund or activity attains its aims and purposes. Thus, the most important topics to consider are the extent to which the objectives were achieved as well as the main factors influencing the success in achieving the goals (Buonanno L., & Nugent N., 2013, p. 131-145). The Oxford Dictionary explains it as a “*degree to which something is successful in producing the desired result; success*” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

### 2.2.2 Natural hazard and natural disaster

According to Nelson, a professor at the Tulane University, a natural hazard is a threat of a natural event, which has a negative effect on humans. The outcome of the natural hazard, when it threatens and harms humans, is a natural disaster (Nelson, 2014). The author Alexander defined the term in his book "Natural Disasters" as a rapid impact of the natural environment upon the socio-economic system or an event, that threatens the society with major unwanted consequences (Alexander, 1999). Oxford Dictionaries describes it as a "*natural event such as a flood, earthquake, or hurricane that causes great damage or loss of life*" (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

### 2.2.3 Evaluation

The Business Dictionary describes evaluation as an analysis of ongoing or completed activities that support management accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluation of completed activities is called ex-post evaluation (Business Dictionary, 2017). The ex-post evaluation is used by the EU in order to evaluate EU policies. An ex-post evaluation, according to Japan International Cooperation Agency, is "*conducted after a certain period has passed since the completion of a target project with emphasis on the effectiveness and sustainability of the project*" (Japan International Cooperation Agency, n.d.). This evaluation will be used in this research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Fund. It also aims at deriving recommendations for the improvement of the Fund.

### 2.2.4 Policy actor

Shannon, author of the paper "Cross-sectoral policy impacts between forestry and other sectors", stated that policy actors are an individual or group affected by or affiliated with the policy process at any stage. These can be businesses, governments, organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), communities, civil societies or individuals who seek to influence policy outcomes through action (Shannon, n.d.). The most important policy actors for this research are the EU MS and EU institutions, especially the European Commission (EC). These are the most relevant policy actors for this research because the MS are the actors at the EC for the Fund. The EC hands out the money and supervises the process after the money was sent to the MS. The European Parliament (EP) and the Council also play a role, as they approve the proposal of the EC.

### 2.3 Relevant cases

For this research, two important cases were used. These are the earthquake in L'Aquila in 2009 before the reform and the flood in Greece in 2015 after the reform of the Fund in 2014. The general information of both cases will be described in the following sections.

#### 2.3.1 Earthquake in L'Aquila 2009

According to the report "The European Solidarity Fund's response to the 2009 Abruzzi earthquake: The relevance and cost operations" of the European Court of Auditors (ECA), L'Aquila is the capital of the Italian region Abruzzi, which had 73,150 registered inhabitants in 2009. The region and the capital were hit by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake on 06 April 2009. It brought serious harm to the population and caused direct damage of more than ten billion euros to the basic infrastructure. The epicenter of the earthquake was in the capital L'Aquila, while other regions involved were located in the entire province of L'Aquila, the Abruzzo region, and bordering areas. More than 300 people died in the disaster and 1,500 were injured. Furthermore, thousands of people lost their homes and businesses, therefore, up to 67,500 people had to be placed in camps, private houses or hotels. In particular, the earthquake hit the historical center of L'Aquila; this led to buildings being destroyed and other buildings becoming completely unsafe.

Stated in the press release of 23 July, 2009 of the EC, Mr. Samecki, EU Commissioner for regional policy announced that: *"This is the greatest disaster for which the help of the EU'S Solidarity Fund has been solicited since its creation in 2002. The scale of the earthquake, whose consequences continue to be borne by the local population, justifies commensurate support from the EU. Moreover, together with the Italian authorities, we have sought to exploit all the opportunities offered by the Cohesion Policy in order to act urgently and prepare for the future"* (European Commission, 2009).

### 2.3.2 Flood in Greece 2015

Conferring to the EC, Greece was affected by two natural disasters in the beginning of February 2015. Both events were considered as one regional disaster. First, there was a widespread flooding in the broader area of the rivers Evros and Ardas in the East Macedonia and Thrace region. The agricultural sector was exceptionally impacted due to the flood in the Evros basin. About 17,500 hectares of land were flooded, which destroyed farming infrastructure, crops, and warehouses. The main infrastructure was also damaged; namely 150 km of roads, water supplies, and many buildings were destroyed. A similar disaster occurred during the same period in parts of Central and Western Greece, which includes West Greece, Central Greece, the regions of Epirus and Thessaly. Heavy rainfall and storms occurred, strong snowfalls in the mountains and stormy south winds in onshore and offshore areas. Due to the extreme weather conditions, rivers burst their banks, the power was cut and landslides caused a number of mountainous settlements being isolated; consequently, many inhabitants needed to be evacuated. More than 60 percent of the road network in Epirus was damaged; shops, commercial businesses, private homes, and farms were also detracted. Furthermore, cultural heritage assets were affected, including the historic bridge of Plaka in Tzoumerka, that was swept away from the water of the Arachthos River (European Commission, 2015).

### 2.3 European integration theories

Policies and policy-making processes, including the Fund, can be studied from different angles. European integration theories can be seen as analytic tools to explain the variation in EU policy-making. All theories offer different interpretations of the integration process as well as diverse implications for EU policy-making. In order to analyze the effectiveness of the Fund, this research will focus on the European integration theory of *new-institutionalism*. This theory underlines the different viewpoints and opinions that can be formed on the Fund. Basing research on the theory of new-institutionalism will help to understand the role of the different institutions and actors concerning policy-making. In particular, the role that institutions played concerning the implementation and evaluation of the Fund. Additionally, it will help to observe how the institutions influence decision-making processes and more specifically how they influence the effectiveness of the Fund. Especially *rational-choice institutionalism* stresses the influence of legislative outcomes and the impact on policy processes within the EU institutions. This theory will show different angles and are therefore important to take into account for this research.

### 2.3.1 New institutionalism

Authors Wallace, Pollack and Young argue that new institutionalists share a political and sociological view of institutions and how they interact and affect society. It is believed that organizational structures and practices are often reflections of rules, beliefs, and conventions. There are three primary theories of “institutionalism” developed in the 1980s and in the early 1990s, including rational-choice institutionalism.

*Rational-choice institutionalism* was created by American political scientists who tried to understand the origins and effects of the US congressional institutions on legislative behavior and policy outcomes. In this theory, it is argued that congressional institutions, particularly the committee system, could influence legislative outcomes and make them durable when facing subsequent challenges. Even though the theory is rooted in the context of national Northern-American political institutions, it also showed an impact on policy processes and outcomes within the EU (Wallace A., Pollack M.A. & Young, A.R., 2010, p.10-15).

Kreutler, author of the book “Interest Group Coalitions in the European Union”, wrote, there are four main characteristics that can be related to rational-choice institutionalism. Firstly, rational-choice institutionalists believe in a set of behavioral assumptions, which are that influential actors have established preferences and therefore behave instrumentally and with strategic methods to maximize the fulfillment of these preferences. Secondly, actors try to reach an outcome that is collectively suboptimal. An aspect which hinders the actors in acting collectively-superior is the absence of institutional arrangements. Thirdly, rational-choice theorists explain how institutions affect individual behavior by the “calculus approach”. This approach explains the behavior of actors by interpreting that their behavior is likely to be influenced by a strategic calculus. This calculus is affected by other actors’ expectations, and the behavior of actors arguably leads to better social outcomes (Kreutler, 2015, p.92-93).

Referring to Wengert, author of the dissertation “Funding for EU Regional Policy under the Financial Framework – New Institutional Explanations for Allocative Decisions” at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, rational-choice institutionalists argue that institutions constrain political actors in the rational quest of their preferences. This translates to the notion that political actors are “bounded rational” and therefore perform conforming to the “logic of consequences”. The reason is that the actors need to consider formal institutional roles, as well as their behavior. The Fund belongs to *cohesion policy*. Relating the approach of rational-choice institutionalists to the cohesion policy, that would signify that each political actor strives to maximize their individual advantage from the policy in the decision-making processes. It would also mean that each actor engages in strategic behavior to reach this goal, however, it could also mean that institutional constraints could be encountered. Yet, this concept mainly applies to the MS, because the other decision-makers do not have their own territories, which could be affected by the policy. Furthermore, the powers and strategies of the actors, in this sense the EU institutions, might get influenced by the effect of decision-making rules. For instance, the unanimous decision-making procedure by the European Council requires MS to make compromises (Wengert, 2011).

It is also relevant to take the view of *historical institutionalists* into account for this research. While rational-choice institutionalism concentrates on policy outcomes, according to the authors Fioretos, Falleti, and Sheingate, historical institutionalism observes how events and processes influence the transformation and origin of institutions which are involved in political and economic relations. Historical institutionalist’s main focus lies within the understanding of evolution, origin, and consequences of the institutions (Fioretos, Falleti & Sheingate, 2016, p.3-5)

## 2.4 The Policy cycle

Buonanno and Nugent state that the policy cycle is a useful tool for examining the process of public policies. The cycle includes different stages, in which policy issues turn from “inputs” (*problems*) into “outputs” (*policies*). Multiple analysts provide different numbers of policy stages (Buonanno L., & Nugent N., 2013, p. 131-145). However, the main stages of the policy cycle are as follows:

1. Agenda-setting
2. Policy-shaping
3. Decision-making
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

The relevant stages for this research concerning the Fund are the *implementation* and *evaluation* stages. The first three stages are not necessary to include in this research to evaluate the effectiveness.

### 2.4.1 Implementation stage

According to Mwije, author of “The Policy Cycle Notion - The Policy Cycle, Its Usefulness, and Criticism”, the implementation stage puts decisions into effect (Mwije, 2013). According to Haase, the Fund is implemented under Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 and belongs to the policy area of cohesion policy (Haase, 2016). Buonanno and Nugent mentioned that the implementation stage is very complex and broken down into several aspects; transposition into national law of EU directives, issuing of administrative legislation and the “front-line” application and enforcement of EU law. The transposition is concerned with directives, regulations, and decisions. Passing administrative legislation means that many policy areas need directives to support the administrative legislation, usually via decisions and regulations, while directives mainly deal with policies. They are legal acts and set out targets which have to be achieved in all EU countries. However, the MS can individually decide on how to reach these goals. Regulations and decisions are rather engaged with the administration. Regulations are legally binding and must be directly implemented across the EU. Decisions, on the other hand, are only binding for those to whom they are addressed (Buonanno L., & Nugent N., 2013, p. 131-145).

Furthermore, Mwije argues that the application of most EU policies is conducted by a range of authorities in the MS. As the legal guardian, the EC monitors the national policy implementation and controls the application and enforcement of policies in each MS. In cases of non-compliance, different procedures exist in order to deal with the transgressor. Concerning the Fund, the EC is the most important policy actor (Mwije, 2013).

#### 2.4.2 Evaluation stage

For this research, an ex-post evaluation is used in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Fund in two specific cases. The evaluation stage is the most relevant one concerning this research because it is used by the EU and for this research to examine the effectiveness of policies. Usually, the evaluation used by the EU for policy evaluations takes place on three different stages: ex-ante evaluation (before policy development), mid-term evaluation (during policy development) and ex-post evaluation (after the completion of a policy program). Yet, for this research, only an ex-post evaluation is used, because the two cases which will be examined are already completed. So far, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Fund, the EU has not used an ex-post evaluation for specific cases where the Fund was used. But the ECA has done a performance audit, which controlled the efficiency and effectiveness on the Fund from the years 2002 until 2008. This ex-post evaluation includes the following questions:

1. Were the policy goals clear?
2. What were the costs and benefits?
3. Did the benefits exceed the costs?
4. Were enough resources available?
5. Were resources used properly?
6. Was the policy implemented as intended?
7. Were there any management weaknesses?
8. Were the policy goals achieved?
9. Was the implementation on time?
10. What could be improved?

## 2.5 General assumptions

To complete the theoretical framework, general assumptions on the Fund and the new institutionalism theory are included. These assumptions were drawn by different scholars; the importance to integrate these assumptions is to attain a clear perspective from the different point of views.

In 2008, according to D'Alfonso, the ECA made a core assumption. This assumption concludes that the Fund has been successful in the years of 2002 until 2008 and that the goal of demonstrating solidarity with countries hit by a disaster was met during this time period (D'Alfonso, 2013). Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer, and Lorant, authors of "The European Union Solidarity Fund: an assessment of its recent reforms", elaborated on the assumption, that the Fund could encourage more solidarity in the EU and risk management in the MS. Nevertheless, it is also argued by the writers that the EC has taken relevant actions by implementing the reform, thus, improving the Fund and also linking it to proactive risk reduction (Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer & Lorant, 2015).

The assumptions by the ECA and Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer and Lorant, will be employed for this research. This will be complemented by incorporating the new institutional theory. The aforementioned assumptions were highly relevant to assess the effectiveness of the Fund.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter explains the research methods which were chosen for this dissertation. The goal of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the Fund. The central research question is: *How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?* The following sections encompass the methods used for this research to answer the central research question and in order to offer recommendations.

#### 3.1 Research approach

To answer the research question “*How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?*” three sub-questions were created. The following three paragraphs will elaborate on each sub-question.

The first research sub-question “*What are the implementation measures of the European Union Solidarity Fund?*” has a descriptive nature, because it describes the characteristics of the Fund and how it is implemented. This question was answered by using desk and qualitative research. First, different online and offline sources were consulted. The used sources are online books, online articles, and reports. One of these sources includes information of the website from the EC. These sources were useful to inform the reader about the background information; the characteristics, the budget, application procedure and use of the Fund. Apart from the desk research, an interview was personally conducted with Johannes Wachter, Senior Expert of the Fund at the EC.

For the second sub-question “*How much impact has the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU (evaluation of the policy cycle)?*”, two case studies were examined in order to find out if the Fund was implemented effectively. They were chosen to evaluate the effectiveness on two different real-life events. In order to answer the evaluation questions, qualitative research was encompassed in form of interviews. One was conducted digitally; several questions were filled out by Dr. Anna Sergi, who is an Organized Crime Expert from the University of Essex.

The answers were mostly used in order to receive more insights on the first case study and especially on the involvement of the Mafia in spending the money allocated by the EU. Besides, Wachter also provided information on this sub-question. Next to the qualitative research, desk research was performed in order to answer the evaluation questions for the case studies. Hence, desk research and qualitative research were included to answer the second sub-question.

The third sub-question “*Have the amendments of the Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of May 2014 improved the European Union Solidarity Fund?*” has a comparative nature. It includes an overview of the new regulation and a comparison of the effectiveness of the Fund before and after the reform. The accomplishments of the reform were included in the results. Desk research, including the website of the EC, was used to answer this sub-question. Also, the interview with Wachter provided useful data. Further information on the desk research, field research, interviews, as well as the data analysis are explained below.

#### 3.1.1 Desk and field research

In order to obtain the results in this research, both desk research and field research was conducted. To gather the information on the effectiveness of the Fund, annual reports of the EC and ECA, journal articles, papers, books, interviews, and statistics were used. Furthermore, extensive research has been done to evaluate the two case studies and thus, come to a conclusion and finally offer recommendations. Desk research provided insights in the information for all sub-questions. Haase, who works for the EP and wrote articles for the EC website, made information on the regulation of 2014 available. Next to this source, the research paper of Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer, and Lorant provided information on assessment of the recent reforms. Due to their research, it was possible to examine the accomplishment of the new regulation. During the desk research, keywords including; natural disaster, solidarity, policy-making and others, have resulted in useful ‘hits’ on the searching machines, which made it possible to find online articles, reports, and journals suitable for the research. The field research consisted of two interviews, which offered further information on the topics, especially for the case studies. The approach for the field research will be clarified in section 3.1.2 in more detail.

### 3.1.2 Interviews

Two participants were selected for an interview. They were selected based on their professional expertise in the field of criminology and the Fund. The first candidate was Dr. Anna Sergi, Organised Crime Expert from the University of Essex. The second participant was Johannes Wachter, Senior Expert of the Fund at the EC. The informed consent form was obtained from both interviewees.

The interview with Sergi was done through e-mail communication, as Sergi was residing in Australia at that time. It was a structured interview with a set list of six questions. These questions dealt with: the overall effectiveness of the Fund, the involvement of the Mafia in the case study of L'Aquila and improvements of the Fund. The interview with Wachter took place face-to-face at the EC in Brussels. The interview was recorded through an App in a Smartphone called "Voice recorder". It was an unstructured interview, which was informal and allowed the interviewee the freedom to talk and explain the Fund; it provided in-depth and detailed information about the Fund itself. The aim of the interview was mainly, to receive an overview of the most relevant details of the Fund, to understand how it is used, implemented and also to gain insights on the other sub-questions. The evaluation questions used in the result section in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Fund concerning these two cases were used as a general guideline. The participant was able to ask questions for clarification and also the interviewer asked follow-up questions for explanation.

### 3.1.3 Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed through different methods. The obtained literature from books, websites, and reports were used for the literature review and to answer the three sub-questions. Also, Excel was used to put gathered information into a graphic. The data of the first interview, with Sergi, was analyzed for the second sub-question. More precisely, the answers were used in order to find proof of the involvement or non-involvement of the Mafia in the case study of L'Aquila. The data of the second interview, with Wachter, was examined to understand the function and use of the Fund and also, to gain information on the implementation and reform in 2014.

### 3.2 Research outline: qualitative research

This research has a qualitative nature. This method was chosen to obtain detail, quality and in-depth information on the topic. The focus of this research lies in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Fund. Included are two case studies for even deeper information on the context. Scholar articles, the website of the EC and official reports, such as the annual report of the ECA are included.

### 3.3 Limitations

According to Buonanno and Nugent, all EU policies should receive an evaluation, even though this can be difficult to achieve in practice. The reasons for that are, firstly, that some policy areas cannot be evaluated systematically with the use of cost-benefit analysis and rational tools. Secondly, the outcomes of policies can be problematic to measure. Another factor is the multi-layered nature of policy responsibilities (Buonanno L., & Nugent N., 2013, p. 131-145). For these reasons, it can be argued, that evaluating the effectiveness of the Fund faces the obstacle of measuring the outcome. But on the other hand, according to Wachter, the Fund is a very simple instrument with only limited policy goals (Wachter, 2017). Due to these few and modest objectives of the Fund, it is simpler to evaluate the outcome and effectiveness of the Fund. Besides, specific policy evaluations, like the one used in this research, have not been used in regard to the Fund yet. Evaluations are only proceeded after several years and also not for each case. Therefore, evaluating the Fund with this method can be seen as highly relevant. Also, the evaluation of policies has gained a higher priority in the EU, especially concerning results-oriented decision-making based on qualitative and quantitative evidence, accountability and transparency.

Besides, one main source used to answer the evaluation questions for the first case study was the report of the ECA on the effectiveness of the Fund in the years of 2002 until 2008. Also, the information collected from the interview with Wachter was one of the main sources for both case studies. Still, other online sources and the interview with Sergi provided information in order to answer the evaluation questions as well.

Furthermore, another limitation concerning this research has to be taken into account. In regard to the second case study, the flood in Greece in 2015, there were a limited number of sources available. The case only happened recently, thus, evaluations and reports on this case are not published at this moment. Also, the reform in 2014 has been implemented since a short time period and only a small number of cases occurred since the new regulation. To evaluate if the reform has shown any improvements yet can therefore only be analyzed due to a limited number of sources. Nevertheless, the interview with Wachter, official reports and websites have provided enough information in order to answer all sub-questions.

Additionally, the limiting perspective of the interview participants needs to be considered for this research. An interview with an expert on a specific field remains one person's point of view. The interviewee Wachter presents the given information only from one specific angle. As he works for the EC and was involved in establishing the Fund, he is interested in mainly showing the positive policy outcomes. Even though, he also mentioned some negative aspects and improvements that still need to be considered. In the end, the interview provided a lot of useful information and helped to answer all three sub-questions.

#### 4. Findings & Analysis: The implementation measures of the Fund

##### 4.1 Findings: What are the implementation measures of the European Union Solidarity Fund?

This chapter is dedicated to the findings on the implementation measurements of the Fund. Data was collected from different online sources. Additional data from the interview with Wachter is used as well. The following sections will include the findings on the characteristics and budget, the application procedure and use of the Fund and lastly, the implementation measures. Finally, an analysis will be provided in the former sections of this chapter.

##### 4.1.1 Characteristics and budget

According to Haase, the Fund was founded in 2002 as a reaction to the floods in Central Europe; Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 entered into force on 15 November 2002.

*“A European Union Solidarity Fund, hereinafter referred to as “the Fund”, is hereby established to enable the Community to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to emergency situations under the terms of this Regulation.”*

(Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 2012/20)

The main objective of the Fund is to provide support in the event of a major natural disaster, which seriously impacts the natural environment, living conditions or the economy in one or more regions of a MS or of a country applying for accession. The Fund assists by providing a grant, for which the MS in need has to apply for. It is a financial measure for decreasing damage that is principally non-insurable. Private damages are considered as insurable and are therefore not provided by the Fund (Haase, 2016).

Stated by Johannes Wachter, the Fund is not a rapidly responding instrument, but rather a financial support instrument. It has similarities with structural funds, sharing the principle of *shared management*. This simply means that the EC provides the money to the affected MS (under certain requirements), which spends the money regarding basic conditions and afterward reports to the EC. The MS has 18 months to spend the grant and six months to report to the EC. The budget and the requirements to receive the funding are as follows: The Fund is not covered by the EU budget; however, it is financed from the collective investment of MS in the Fund. Up to 500 million euros (since reform in 2014) can be made available every year in order to complement public expenditure on emergency operations. How much funding the state receives, depends on the total direct damage in accordance with the relative wealth of the country as reflected by the threshold. The threshold is the level of damage defined by the regulation to generate the intervention of the Fund for major disasters and is specific to each country. It is either calculated as 0.6 percent of the State's Gross National Income (GNI) or three billion euros. In case that the direct damage of a natural disaster exceeds the three billion euro or 0.6 percent of the GNI, it is considered as a "major" disaster. If the direct damage is lower, it is considered a regional disaster. Another criterion for a regional disaster is, that it occurs in a region at Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) level 2. The NUTS-classification is a hierarchical system to divide the economic area of the EU (Wachter, 2017).

Referring to the EC, there are two steps whereby a country affected by a major disaster receives a lower rate of 2.5 percent for the part of the total direct damage below the threshold and a higher share of 0.6 percent for the part of the damage which is exceeding the threshold. In the end, the two amounts are added up. The same technique is applied for regional disasters and for countries that are applying for aid under the "neighboring country". As a consequence, countries affected by disasters, which by definition stay below the major disaster threshold, receive 2.5 percent of total direct damage in aid. Furthermore, in order to avoid early depletion of the Fund, a capping system was introduced. Therefore, the maximum aid amount may not exceed two-thirds of the annual allocation of the Fund in the time period of one year. The rule is that for a disaster which has been accepted on the basis of the neighboring country, the paid amount may not exceed the cost of recovery and emergency operations in principle appropriate for a contribution from the Fund. Before any amount of financial aid can be paid to one of the MS, the EP and the Council need to approve the proposal of the EC (European Commission, 2017).

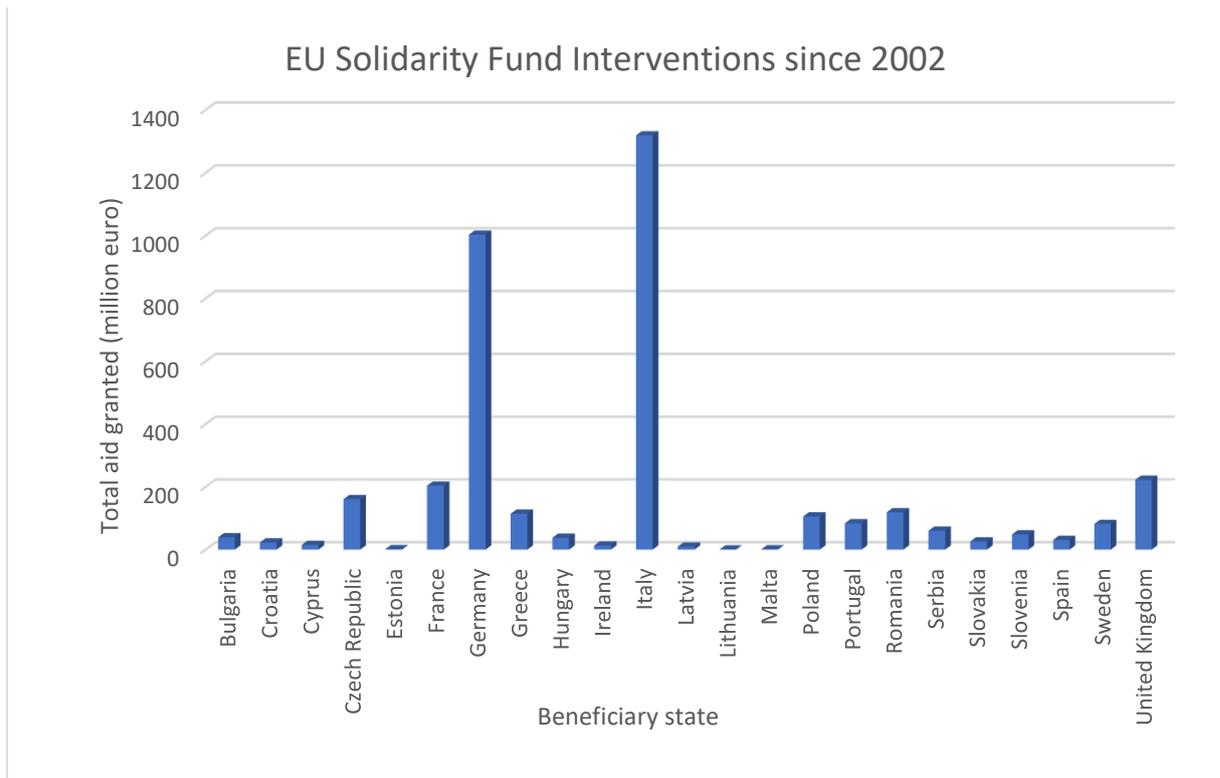


Figure 2: Interventions since 2002 (European Commission, 2017)

Figure 2 shows how much money was provided through the Fund for all EU MS that required financial aid since 2002. The graph shows the countries that received funding and the total aid granted to them in million euros. In total, 3,889,276 euros were granted. The country that received most funding was Italy with 131 million euros due to many natural disasters over several years. Germany got the most funding after Italy, with 100 million euros due to severe storms and floods. The countries with the lowest funding were Lithuania with 0,4 million euros and Malta with 0.96 million euros.

Haase mentioned that, since the establishment of the Fund in November 2002, relief for 70 disasters (including forest fires, floods, earthquakes, drought, and storms) supported 24 European countries so far. The total value used for funding is more than 3,7 billion euros (Haase, 2016).

Article 3(2) of Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 lies down the measures which are urgent for funding:

*“The aim of the Fund is to complement the efforts of the States concerned and to cover part of their public expenditure in order to help the eligible State to carry out, depending on the type of natural disaster, the following essential emergency and recovery operations:*

- (a) Restoring the working order of infrastructure and plant in the fields of energy, water and waste water, telecommunications, transport, health and education;*
- (b) Providing temporary accommodation and funding rescue services to meet the needs of the population concerned;*
- (c) Securing preventive infrastructure and measures of protection of cultural heritage;*
- (d) Cleaning up disaster-stricken areas, including natural zones, in line with, where appropriate, eco-system based approaches, as well as immediate restoration of affected natural zones to avoid immediate effects from soil erosion.”*

(Article 3(2) of Regulation (EC) No 2012/20)

#### 4.1.2 Application and use of the Fund

Haase stated that in order to receive the grant, the affected state has to submit an application for assistance to the EC, which cannot be handed in later than twelve weeks after the first effects of the natural disaster. Moreover, the application must estimate the total direct damage and the impact on the economy, population and the environment in question. It also needs to indicate the cost of the required measures and any other sources of funding on disaster risk prevention and management. After the application is handed in, the EC settles an agreement with the affected state and provides the appropriate amount of funding. The whole procedure for the MS to receive the grant can take several months. The provided grant must be used within 18 months, and the supported state must pay back any part of the grant which is left over. The state is responsible for the use of the money, for reviewing the way it is spent and for guaranteeing that all costs covered by the Fund are not also covered by other union financing instruments.

Furthermore, the state must present an implementation report to the EC six months after the expiry of the 18-month period. The report shall include all details of the expenditure and all other funding that has been received; including compensation from third parties and insurance settlements (Haase, 2016). Nevertheless, Wachter said that often the MS does not send the report in time. Yet, so far, none of the MS have been fined or penalized for handing it in too late. Also, during the usage of the Fund, the EC does not perform regular checks on the spending. Even though the EC has a supervisory role, it only visits certain countries in order to discuss and decide on the disbursement. To evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Fund, performance audits are conducted; the ECA wrote an evaluation report on the Fund on the years of 2002 until 2008 (Wachter, 2017).

According to Haase and Johannes Wachter, there has been a lot of criticism on the slow procedure of handing out grants to the affected MS. Therefore, a reform was established in 2014. The new reform introduced the possibility for the MS to acquire advance payments, the granting of which is decided by the EC in case sufficient resources are available. Yet, the amount of the advance payments cannot exceed ten per cent of the anticipated amount of the financial contribution and it is stopped at 30 million euros (Haase, 2016; Wachter, 2017).

#### 4.1.3 Implementation measures

Indicated by Haase, the following is the legal basis of the Fund:

“Article 175, third paragraph, Article 212(2) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund and Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund.” (Haase, 2016).

Hahn stated that the Fund was implemented as a regulation, meaning that it is legally binding and becomes directly enforceable in all MS. The regulation does not need to be transposed into national law. In case a MS does not apply a relevant union legislation, a court can confirm the infringement. The EC may cut the aid or even refuse the application (Hahn, 2017).

Additionally, according to Wachter, the Fund is an instrument in its own rights. It belongs to the cohesion policy area; thus, it is an instrument of cohesion policy. The cohesion article can be found under article 175 TFEU.

*“Member states shall conduct their economic policies and shall coordinate them in such a way as, in addition, to attain the objectives set out in Article 174. The formulation and implementation of the Union’s policies and actions and the implementation of the internal market shall take into account the objectives set out in article 174 and shall contribute to their achievement.*

*The Union shall also support the achievement of these objectives by the action it takes through the Structural Funds: European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund – Guidance Section, European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund“*

(Article 175, TFEU)

Researched by Wengert, cohesion policies are financial mechanisms of the EU to implement regional policy (Wengert, 2011). In their book “Policy-Making in the European Union”, Wallace, Pollack, and Young describe that the cohesion policy of the EU refers to the governing principles of the cohesion fund. It mostly aims at reducing the economic and social differences among EU regions by encouraging job creation, economic growth, and competitiveness. Besides, it has been pronounced as *“the world’s largest development policy based on a single legal and institutional framework”* and accounts for about one-third of the EU budget (Wallace A., Pollack M.A. & Young, A.R., 2010, p.10-15). The research of Buonanno and Nugent on cohesion policy explained in their paper “Explaining the EU’s Policy Portfolio. Applying a Federal Integration Approach to EU Cohesion Policy”, shows that cohesion is one of the most important policy responsibilities of the EU. Different reasons can explain this phenomenon; firstly, cohesion increased significantly in regard to the budgetary expenditure of the EU. Secondly, cohesion policy includes a wide range of policy activities, which are telecommunications, infrastructure and job training. Also, many policy goals are linked to cohesion policy, for instance promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development. Thirdly, most of the major reforming treaties set the EU’s commitment to social and economic cohesion. It started with the Paris Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which further formed the European Social Fund (ESF). Lastly, cohesion policy is of great importance, as a large number of policy actors are involved in the direct policy-making and policy implementation.

All major EU institutions play a key role in the whole policy process of cohesion policy, including the agenda setting, funding, implementation and monitoring. The financial frameworks of cohesion policy are established by the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). These are set up by the EC, the EP, the Council and the European Council. While the Council and the EP create cohesion objectives, the EC progresses the guidelines for specific program opportunities. The role of the Committee of the Regions is to perform in a consultative capacity on cohesion policy decision-making. In general, it can be concluded, since the last years, cohesion policy occupies an important position in the policy portfolio of the EU (Buonanno & Nugent, 2011).

Concerning the implementation of cohesion policy, Wallace, Pollack, and Young argue that two key principles play the main role, which are *additionality* and *partnership*. The principle of additionality means that the EC requires the MS to show that EU funds are spent in addition to any planned domestic spending, but are not used to substitute this. In case a MS does not comply with the additionality rule, they risk losing funding. It indicates the significance of the EC's and MS's influence. The principle of partnership was understood as an innovation that promised central-government gatekeepers to give actors such as sub-national governments a formal role in the decision-making process. The study of Hooghe (1996) on the effects of the 1988 reform principles on "territorial restructuring" within eight MS, showed that the implementation of the partnership principle differs across the MS. Because the actors at EU, national and sub-national levels have different sets of resources, they have a dissimilar ability to influence the implementation process. Both the additionality and partnership principle are seen as the core concerning multi-level governance and Europeanisation, further leading to discussions about the role of the EC and other supranational institutions (Wallace A., Pollack M.A. & Young, A.R., 2010, p.10-15).

#### 4.1.4 Summary

The first sub-question shows that the Fund is implemented as a regulation, is directly binding and belongs to the cohesion policy. The Fund came into force in 2002, in order to financially support MS in case of a natural disaster. It is financed from the collective investment of MS in the Fund; up to 500 million euros are available each year. The affected state needs to apply for it, accordingly, the EC needs to get the proposal approved by the EP and the Council. How much is provided to the affected state depends on the direct total damage of the disaster and the relative wealth of the country. The Fund is used for emergency and recovery operations, including infrastructure, accommodation and cleaning up of disaster-stricken areas. A MS receiving the Fund has 18 months in order to spend the grant and six months for reporting on the spending to the EC. There has been criticism that the implementation procedure takes too long, and this is why a new reform came into force in 2014.

#### 4.2 Analysis

Several statements can be derived from the results of the first sub-question. First, it could be argued that looking at the budgetary requirements of the Fund, the bigger MS have a clear advantage in comparison to the smaller MS due to their GNI and average wealth. The method used, is supposed to guarantee that the country is able to deal with the disaster with its own relative capacity, as well as to ensure relatively poorer states receive more aid than richer ones. Nevertheless, when affected by a disaster, bigger MS receive more funding than smaller ones. As a consequence, it can be said that the Fund is actually providing less financial aid to smaller or less wealthy MS. From a practical point of view, larger MS could be affected by natural disasters on a larger scale (including more inhabitants) than smaller MS. However, smaller MS, in fact, receive less financial aid, even if the natural disaster in their country could affect more inhabitants than in larger MS. Thus, it can be stated that the measurement of the amount of funding provided by the Fund is uneven concerning larger and smaller MS.

Further, not all MS do necessarily benefit from the Fund. Each MS pays a certain amount each year into the Fund, but not every state gets affected by a natural disaster. The Netherlands, for example, contributes each year but has not had a natural disaster since the establishment of the Fund. But politically, the involvement is important in order to show solidarity and because a natural disaster could happen at any moment. Therefore, it could be stated that the Fund provides a so-called insurance for MS, in case they are affected by a natural disaster.

It can be argued that the Fund does not represent as much solidarity as it should. The EU institutions established the Fund based on the solidarity clause; on the other hand, the EU institutions have not been willing to pay for natural disasters from the EU budget. It could be a consideration to include the Fund into the budget of the EU. This would result into a harmonization of the Fund, as it would have its own budget provided by the EU. When receiving an application, the EC could easily decide, assess and provide grants. The sole disadvantage would be, that the Fund would rather become a spending target from the point of view of the EU institutions, as money from the EU budget always needs to be spent within a certain timeframe. Hence, this concept is rather unrealistic.

Additionally, it could be claimed that the EC does not take its role as the supervisor very serious. Regarding the Fund, the EC (as well as the MS) can be declared as the most important policy actor. Apart from managing the application and handing out the grants, its role is to supervise the MS, to take track of the spending, to report and take action in case of non-compliance with the regulation. The MS are rather autonomous when it comes down to the spending, the MS have to hand in a report after the usage of the Fund. The EC offers help in the application process and rarely visits the affected country in order to do check-ups. This, however, does occur rather less than more frequently. On one hand, it can be mentioned that giving the MS the whole responsibility would need to reflect a lot of trust from the institutions, on the other hand, it could be said that the EC does not act according to its role. Moreover, it seems as if the EC is not involved enough, lacks the investment on checking up and the ability on evaluating the Fund.

## 5. Findings & Analysis: The impact of the Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU

5.1 Findings: How much impact has the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU (evaluation of the policy cycle)?

This chapter provides the findings and the analysis on the evaluation of the Fund in regard to the first case study. It is dedicated to evaluating the earthquake in L'Aquila in 2009. Data was collected from different online sources and from two experts; with Johannes Wachter and Anna Sergi.

### 5.1.1 Case Study 1: The earthquake in L'Aquila 2009

The following sections include information on the background of the earthquake in L'Aquila, further, the ex-ante evaluation will be applied and an analysis and a conclusion of the evaluation will be provided.

#### 5.1.1.1 L'Aquila 2009: major disaster

According to the report of the ECA, the total damage of the disaster in L'Aquila 2009 was projected at more than 10 billion euros. That amount represents 0.67 percent of Italy's GNI and is hence three times the threshold of three billion euros for mobilizing the Fund. The disaster was hence ranked as a *major disaster*. To be able to financially cope with the reconstruction situation, Italy applied for assistance within the ten-week deadline. Afterwards, on 8 June 2009, the EC proposed to the Council and EP to mobilize 494 million euros for reconstruction operations to Italy. The EC indicated that the cost of necessary emergency operations had been projected by Italy at 2,004 million euros, which was the largest share in terms of rescue services and provisional housing. Accordingly, the EU granted half a billion euro from the Fund to the Italian emergency operations. Besides, the Italian authorities declared that they were discovering options to receive funding through other structural funds as well (ECA, 2012).

### 5.1.1.2 Ex-post evaluation

#### 1. Were the policy goals clear?

The policy goals were clearly implemented in the regulation. Wachter said, the overall policy goals of the Fund are simple: The EC pays out the money and the MS spends it (Wachter, 2017). Also, according to the ECA, the goals for first emergency operations, the temporary housing modules, and the CASE housing project were clearly set in the agreement between the EU institutions and Italian authorities. In regard to the housing project, the aim was, firstly to move people without accommodation to immediate accommodation. Afterwards, if possible before the winter, it was planned to provide provisional, high-quality standard homes (ECA, 2012).

#### 2. What were the costs and benefits?

The costs for the Italian state were the yearly amount that goes into the Fund; 0.6 percent of the GNI. The benefits, in this case, were set in the Agreement No C (2009) 9138, which was signed on 11 November 2009 between the EC and the Department of Civil Protection (DCP). It lays down the extent of the grant:

- 50 million euros for first emergency operations
- 94 million euros for temporary housing modules
- 350 million euros for the CASE housing project (ECA, 2012).

#### 3. Were enough resources available?

Conferring to Wachter, looking at the financial aspect, the EC manages each year to have enough resources available for the Fund; at this stage, before the reform, the annual budget of the Fund was still one billion euros. Italy received the financial support that it was entitled to according to the Fund's measurements. The Fund granted financial support for emergency operations and housing projects. As the Fund is a financial support instrument, it does not cover all the costs which emerged from the natural disaster. Therefore, the Fund only provided financial resources to support L'Aquila, but not to compensate for all recover costs (Wachter, 2017).

#### 4. Were resources used properly?

Referring to the report of the ECA, Italy spent much more on accommodation than was initially planned. The DCP signed contracts for a total amount of 710 million euros for the CASE project, while only 94 million was planned. This includes green areas, civil works, furniture and other costs. On average, each of the 185 apartment blocks that were built cost 3,230,629 euros. The construction cost for each apartment accounts for 134,337 euros. After the apartments were built, they were handed over to the municipality to manage and sell them. Furthermore, due to the delay of the CASE project, additional housing costs were inevitable (ECA, 2012). Giannico, writer of the article “L’Aquila seven years later, an infinite earthquake”, for the Italian newspaper “il manifesto”, argues that the CASE houses cost actually a billion euros. Furthermore, the houses lack quality and therefore, the evacuation of houses and reconstruction lead to even more extra costs (Giannico, 2016). According to Wachter, an infringement procedure was started against the Italian government because it did not respect the *public procurement* rules. These are rules which organize how goods and services spend and apply in cases where monetary value exceeds a certain amount. Nevertheless, the expenditure of the Italian state was in the end stated as eligible and considered as properly used (Wachter, 2017).

Also, according to the information of Giannico, the financial resources were not used properly. The CASE houses which cost much more than intended, are viewing their limits. The houses show extreme problems, such as infiltrations in the garages and apartments, losses from drains, floors which crack open and flood. Houses even had to be evacuated due to structural failure. Several balconies collapsed and people live in poor conditions. There is an open investigation for construction supply and defects of inferior materials with 39 suspects. The company that provided wood for the balconies and dwellings is also under investigation for financial bankruptcy. Massimo Cialente, mayor of the city remarked that it is possible that in the most severe cases, remediation would cost 2,700 euros per square meter, which would be “waste of money and infiltration of mafia” (Giannico, 2016).

Langer, author of the article “Viel Geld für wenig Wiederaufbau”, argues as well that the Italian authorities did not use the financial resources properly. Mentioned by Italian politicians, bureaucratic procedures and administrative barriers hinder the rehabilitation of the city and region. The one blamed for the misuse of money and slow administrative work is the Italian Mafia (Langer, 2011).

To actually blame criminal organizations as the Mafia for the misuse of the money is an accusation which is difficult to prove. But according to Gane, author of the article “Why prosecutors believe the Mafia contributed to the death toll of Italy’s earthquake”, some indications have been found. In a report of the EP, it is stated that around \$555 million, provided to the Abruzzo region, was used by companies with indirect or direct ties to organized crime. Also, Franco Roberti, the head of Italy’s National Anti-Mafia Directorate, mentioned that: “*Post-earthquake reconstruction is a tasty morsel for criminal organizations and business interests.*” (Gane, 2016).

Italian Mafia expert Dr. Felia Allum said that the Mafia has changed tactics, which makes the involvement less visible and more difficult to prove. According to her, nowadays, the Mafia is much less “Mafia-like” as perhaps in the 1980s. Today, it is already set up, they have the right political contacts and businessmen in place. They are now an established force, not using obvious violence and not doing anything spectacular. That is why it becomes harder to trace them and prove that they are involved in specific cases. Modern Mafia is involved in billion-euro businesses, where they can hide their influence in a multifaced web of companies. Sergi confirmed that there were a lot of Mafia groups involved in the case of the earthquake in L’Aquila, especially the “Ndrangheta”. According to her information, the Mafia is not necessarily involved in the access to EU money, but rather in the local administration of the Fund by investing in contracts for the construction. She states that: “*There is not One Mafia. We are talking about different clans especially of the Ndrangheta, already present in Abruzzo and involved in political corruption and contracts for construction. Mainly construction is the way in, through winning of tenders and bets and being able to control the allocation of work through subcontracts (companies controlled directly or indirectly by the clans) and through infiltration in the local administration.*” (Sergi, 2017).

The Cable News Network (CNN) also reported about the involvement of the Mafia in reconstruction work after earthquakes. In the article “Keep Mafia out of Italy earthquake rebuild, warns prosecutor” by Angela Dewan, Sergi stated that the construction after an earthquake is one of the Mafia’s main sources of revenue. One reason for that is, that construction is connected to a territory. Therefore, the Mafia does not only pursue construction contracts for money but as well to mark their territory (Dewan, 2016).

Referring to Gane, the Mafia is involved in the cement businesses and has therefore been blamed for the level of disaster in L'Aquila, because the cement and reconstructed houses were not built to resist earthquakes. Dr. Allum notes that: *"It's not that all the big cement businesses are Mafia businesses, but a lot of these criminal organizations-and we are talking since the 1980s-saw the potential in cement. They invested money, got close to businessmen, and were therefore able to invest in an invisible way, so that now they don't necessarily need to do anything heavy-handed. It's quite sophisticated; they don't necessarily need to target the politician, or they don't need to target the local administrator, because the Mafia is so involved and intertwined in the cement sector that they probably have a hand in lots of people who provide cement and therefore are in a win-win situation."* (Gane, 2016).

Author Søndergaard stated, in the years 2010 and 2011, the Prosecutor of Aquila opened multiple inquiries into the misuse of the Fund for reconstruction and emergency by criminal organizations. Olga Capasso, the prosecutor national substitute of the National Anti-Mafia Department (Direzione nazionale antimafia: DNA), mentioned on 25 January 2010, that it seems to him that among the problems related to combat organized crime, L' Aquila is one of the biggest problems at national level (Søndergaard, 2013). Wachter stated, that as long as there is no proof that the Mafia was involved and it can only be assumed, the EU cannot act (Wachter, 2017).

The Commissioner Hahn asked the EC several questions about the infringement procedure on 29 January 2013. The EC stated in its answers that "the EU Solidarity Fund was not used for the reconstruction purposes but for the emergency operation". The Italian government does not agree; the answers of the EC are in contrast to the statements of the Italian government. In the end, it remains uncertain whether the EC tried to justify its own absence of vigilance concerning the spending of the granted money (Søndergaard, 2013).

#### 5. Was the policy implemented as intended?

In accordance with the report of the ECA, not all operations were implemented conferring to the implementation agreement. The CASE housing project did not comply with the Fund's regulation. The implementation agreement provided for the creation of 160 temporary housing blocks, including 4,000 to 4,500 apartments to accommodate more than 15,000 people. In total, 185 apartment blocks were built in less than a year after the event of the earthquake, but not according to plan. Instead of supplying temporary accommodation, the CASE project built permanent houses which exceeded temporary needs and costs provided by the Fund. Yet, the temporary housing modules were implemented according to the provisions of the regulation; the DCP built 3,313 temporary houses and 33 temporary schools, as it was agreed on. Also, 59 schools, which were damaged, were restored and reinforced. (ECA, 2012). Even though the ECA reports that Italy did not comply, Wachter argues, that it is basically the decision of the MS how to spend the grant. The Fund's main goal is to hand out the money and further, Italy needs to take the responsibilities and decisions on how to use it (Wachter, 2017).

#### 6. Were there any management weaknesses?

After the grant was paid out to Italy, management weaknesses occurred from the side of the MS. According to Alexander, author of the article "The L'Aquila earthquake of 6 April 2009 and Italian Government Policy on Disaster Response", first, the management of the emergency was a success due to the quick national response. The police, fire and medical services, as well as armed forces, were involved in managing - for instance - the traffic, medical and other emergency issues. Even though in the beginning, the management of the emergency was a success, the management of dealing with disaster risk at levels of government and society is argued by Alexander to have failed completely. The reason for that is that the system is incomplete; national guidelines for these emergencies are too complex and out-dated. He also argues that the Italian government lacks interest in disaster management, which consequently leads to insufficient control of the situation (Alexander, 2010, p. 325-342).

The Advisor of Assistance to Population Fabio Pelini complains about many management problems which occurred during the last years. The CASE housing problem remains one of the biggest issues and L'Aquila "*is still a disoriented city*" (Giannico, 2016). The ECA states in their report that regarding the resources for the buildings, the implementing authority should have given more consideration to the contracts because of the high amount of work and the short time for implementation. More resources with better quality could have been made available. Also, to save time, direct deals were used instead of procurement procedures. As a result, prices were higher than necessary. Furthermore, potential construction sites have not been identified and assessed beforehand. In general, it can be said that management authorities did not pay enough attention to the economic aspects. (ECA, 2012).

Conferring to Langer, another management issue concerning the CASE project was the relocation of families and friends. They were taken apart and resettled in different locations, with the consequence of psychological stress (Langer, 2011). In total, the outcome for the CASE project could have been rather according to plan and issues could have been avoided with better planning in advance. Alexander remarks, that the usage of ordinances "got out of hand" and that as a consequence, public money fell into the hands of entrepreneurs and engineers (Alexander, 2010, p. 325-342). That a private company made use of these ordinances can be the explanation for the management weaknesses.

Yet, Sergi added that there were management weaknesses from both sides, the Italian state, and the EC. In the interview, she said that: "*There were structural problems, including corruption and mafia infiltration that did not make the procedure work smoothly. However, the monitoring system of the EC did not seem to pick that up in their checks. As always, the main problems are, that controls from Brussels are not effective because at the local levels there is misconduct or simple slowness in proceedings.*" (Sergi, 2017). Accordingly, mainly the MS had management weaknesses with the spending of the grant. Even though this is the MS's responsibility, the EC could have done more check-ups and supervision on the spending.

#### 7. Were the policy goals achieved?

According to Langer, the goals were not achieved, as the capital, L'Aquila is still destroyed and buildings still have not been repaired. The housing project did not work out as planned. Too many inhabitants were without housing for too long and only two years after the earthquake, the housing situation improved (Langer, 2011). In Giannico's article, it is written, that reconstruction was promised to be completed by 2017. But it seems as if the city still needs several years to be fully rebuilt from the earthquake. Some businesses and offices have reopened, even though, there are still more than 420 active construction sites that need to be finished (Giannico, 2016). Also, regarding the report of the ECA, the CASE housing project did not comply with the Fund's objectives, as the Fund only provides for the most urgent needs, while the housing project exceeded that limit and had to be consequently left to other funding instruments. In addition, the housing project was not activated on time; it also did not apply to the number of people who actually needed the accommodation. In April 2012, there were still 11,292 inhabitants receiving lump sums for rent at a monthly cost of three million euros, 142 in barracks and 162 people living in hotels. Besides, the aim of accommodating the people before winter was not met. Only 6,300 of 15,000 people included in the implementation agreement were able to receive accommodation before the winter started (ECA, 2012). Nevertheless, the EC shares another perspective. Wachter mentioned, that the policy goals were clearly achieved because the EC provided the grant to Italy and the MS spent the whole amount in the given time period of one year. Therefore, from his point of view, the Fund could be claimed as effective (Wachter, 2017).

#### 8. Was the implementation on time?

Referring to Wachter, the implementation was on time. Nevertheless, Søndergaard said in his working document, that it took the EC too long to carry out the audit on the spending by the Italian government; in fact, it took two years. The EC justified its delay with the claim of Italian authorities assured that there have been no breaches of the EU public procurement rule (Søndergaard, 2013).

## 9. What could be improved?

Aspects, which the MS could improve:

- Political leaders in Abruzzo should encourage community engagement to improve the quality of decision-making. Overall, the Italian government should rethink regional policies and decision-making procedures
- Dr. Allum points out, that, regarding criminal organizations in the Abruzzo region, suspect companies make use of poorly defined regulations in order to circumvent prosecution. That is why a further political level requires to be investigated and also, stricter legislation is needed in order to make businessmen and administrators more liable to account (Gane, 2016).
- The Civil Protection Service needs more resources and a developed capacity to be able to deal with emergency operations and reconstruction after a natural disaster; the national guidelines require improvement.
- In regard to the CASE housing project, the Italian government should have only spent the available money, which was funded. This amount should have been used to build only temporary instead of permanent houses. Also, the right quality should have been used to prevent reconstruction, evacuations and further spending. Administration work needs stricter legislation and supervision by Italian authorities to avoid management weaknesses.

Aspects, which the EU institutions could improve:

- The EC should state clearer that the Fund only provides money for emergency operations and short-term reconstruction, not for long-term reconstruction.
- Administration by the EC, for example, to carry out the audit on spending should take less time.
- Improvement of the EU institutions to adapt the regulation and encourage the MS in controlling the economic aspects of emergency projects (ECA, 2012).

## 5.2 Analysis

Several assumptions can be derived from the ex-ante evaluation of the earthquake in L'Aquila in 2009. First, it could be said that the Fund was mistaken by the MS. Italy understood the Fund as an aid instrument for long-term reconstruction. Yet, the Fund only provides a certain amount of money to financially help the affected MS with emergency operations and short-term reconstruction; the long-term reconstruction is the responsibility of the MS. Italy and a lot of authors argue that the Fund was not effective because the Abruzzo region and the capital L'Aquila has not been rebuilt. Even though, from the point of view of the EC, the Fund can be claimed as effective because the policy goals were achieved; the grant was paid out by the EC and spent by the MS. Consequently, it could be argued that the policy goals and the meaning of the Fund were stated unclearly.

Furthermore, it could be claimed that the partnership principle (explained in section 4.1.3), was in the case of the earthquake in Italy not successful. The principle plays an important role in the implementation of cohesion policy. According to this case study, it would mean that the EU institutions gave the Italian government a formal role in the decision-making process. This was done by giving Italy the responsibility of spending the grant on emergency operations and reconstruction. Yet, because Italy did not comply with the implementation agreement, the institutions started an infringement procedure. Therefore, it could be argued that Italy had excessive responsibility and the institutions gave the government too much freedom in the decision-making process. Because the partnership principle and the ability to influence the implementation process differs across the MS, Italy is possibly a MS, where less influence is required and instead more impact of the EU institutions should be established. The role of the institutions, particularly of the EC, and the partnership principle should be reconsidered in order to have successful policy outcomes.

Moreover, arguably, the EC did not fulfill its role as a supervisor. It could be mentioned that if the EC would have checked more regularly and stricter on the spending of the government, in infringement procedure could have been avoided. Therefore, the EC would need to take its role more serious and would thus, save administration and legal work on starting infringement procedures.

Also, the EU institutions did not react on the accusation that the Mafia was involved in the spending of the EU grant. Wachter mentioned that the institutions can only act when there is actual proof of the involvement. Yet, several experts, such as Franco Roberti, Dr. Feia Allum, and Sergi announce that the Italian Mafia was involved; including a report of the EP. This could be seen as enough proof for the EU institutions to charge the Italian government for the misuse of the grant. Nevertheless, no action was performed. Thus, it could be concluded that the institutions did not fulfill their duties.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The ex-ante evaluation of the Fund concerning the earthquake in L'Aquila 2009 shows, that the Fund was effective from the perspective of the Fund and the EC. Even though there were management weaknesses and an infringement procedure was started by the institutions, both policy actors achieved their goals of paying out and spending the grant. L'Aquila has not yet recovered from the earthquake and reconstruction is still needed; years after the disaster. Still, the Fund only provides financial support for short-term reconstruction until a maximum of 18 months; long-term reconstruction is the responsibility of the MS. Therefore, Italy might have spent the money due to a possible misunderstanding of the Fund. Concluding, the Fund has a short-term impact (18 months) on the emergency operations and reconstruction but has no long term-impact in providing financial aid after a natural disaster.

## 6. Findings & Analysis: The impact of the Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU

6.1 Findings: How much impact has the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU (evaluation of the policy cycle)?

This chapter provides the findings and the analysis on the evaluation of the Fund in regard to the second case study. It is dedicated to evaluating the flood in Greece in 2009. Data was collected from different online sources and from the expert Johannes Wachter.

### 6.1.1 Case Study 2: The flood in Greece 2015

The next sections include information on the background of the flood in Greece in 2015. Further, the ex-ante evaluation will be applied and an analysis and a conclusion of the evaluation will be provided. Concerning this case study, it needs to be considered that the performance audit and final reports on the case by the EU institutions were not completed yet. Thus, all the available data were included in the following sections.

#### *6.1.1.1 Greece 2015: regional disaster*

According to the EC, Greece was hit by two natural disasters in 2015. Consequently, to receive financial aid, Greece applied for the Fund within the deadline of 12 weeks. Since the reform was introduced in 2014, the deadline for the applications was prolonged from 10 to 12 weeks. Both disasters were recognized by the EC as one regional disaster; the direct damage was lower than three billion euros or 0.6 percent of Greece's GNI. According to the measurements, the EC finally granted in total 9,896,950 euros to Greece for emergency and rescue operations (European Commission, 2015).

#### 6.1.1.2. Ex-post evaluation

##### 1. Were the policy goals clear?

Also regarding this case, Wachter stated, that the policy goals of the Fund were clear. The goal of the MS is to spend the grant according to the agreement and within the given time period. Since the reform of 2014, the time period was extended from one year to 18 months (Wachter, 2017). According to the EC, it was stated in the agreement that the goals are to use the Fund for reimbursement of the cost of emergency and rescue operations, the restoration of infrastructure and services and some of the clean-up costs (European Commission, 2015).

##### 2. What were the costs and benefits?

Conferring to Wachter, the cost is the amount which Greece pays each year into the Fund; 0.6 percent of Greece's GNI. The benefits, Greece received for this natural disaster were, as usual, 2.5 percent of the total direct damage in aid (Wachter, 2017). In regard to the EC, 331,135 euros were granted by the EC for Evros and 658,560 euros for Western and Central Greece. This accounts for ten percent of the anticipated financial contribution from the Fund and in total 9.9 million euros for the reconstruction and emergency operations. Next to the money for cleaning-up operations, the following was included:

- 196 million euros for the transport sector
- 83 million euros for the security of preventive infrastructure (European Commission, 2015).

##### 3. Were enough resources available?

Mentioned in the interview with Wachter, in general, the Fund has enough financial resources in order to pay out the grants for the affected MS. Since the reform in 2014, the annual amount available from the Fund was reduced from one billion euros to 500 million euros. Even though this is an immense budget cut and the resources are tight, the amount is still enough to financially cope with a number of cases. Though, if the annual amount would get reduced even more, financial resources would most probably not be sufficient (Wachter, 2017).

According to Kakaliagou, author and director at the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, despite the Fund, due to Greece's economic crisis, capacities and resources are currently limited. Nevertheless, the national civil protection legislation was currently updated and the existing institutional mechanisms for the rapid mobilization of resources in a disaster showed to be effective in utilizing the private sector and civil society during the response and recovery phase (Kakaliagou, 2015).

#### 4. Were the resources used properly?

Because the performance audit on this case has not been completed by the ECA, a conclusion on how and for what precisely Greece used the grant was based on the available data. Referring to Wachter, the MS decide for what exactly they spend the grant and it is their own responsibility. To spend more than the Fund provided is not possible. The EC does not interfere on how MS spend the grant for emergency operations. Yet, the worst-case scenario for the institutions would be, that Greece will finally have spent less than the EC provided because spending the grant is belongs to the min policy goals. In that case, Greece would need to send the remaining amount back to the institution (Wachter, 2017).

#### 5. Was the policy implemented as intended?

Regarding the EC, so far, the policy has been implemented as intended and also according to Wachter, the grant has been paid out by the EC to Greece as planned (European Commission, 2015; Wachter, 2017). Whether Greece actually spent the money according to the implementation agreement can only be seen when the performance audit of the ECA is completed and published.

#### 6. Were there any management weaknesses?

Perraudin, a reporter for the Guardian, mentioned that the administration of the EU institutions took too long. Several months passed until the money was granted to Greece until the state could finally start using the money for the emergency operations. After the affected state handed in the application for the Fund to the EC, the EP and the Council still needed to approve the funding before the money could be sent to the state. Accordingly, this process took a long time and the process needs to be improved so that emergency operations can be performed in a shorter period of time (Perraudin, 2016).

#### 7. Were the policy goals achieved?

The EC and Wachter stated, that the first part of the policy goals was achieved by the EC paying the grant to Greece (European Commission, 2015; Wachter, 2017). In case Greece spent all the money on emergency operations and reconstruction in the given time period of 18 months, all policy goals are achieved. Whether this is the case, can be seen when the performance audit is finalized.

#### 8. Was the implementation on time?

According to Wachter, on behalf of the EC, the implementation was on time, because the money was paid out to Greece according to the agreement (Wachter, 2017). Nevertheless, Perraudin, argues that it took the EC too long to send the money in order to provide emergency aid (Perraudin, 2016).

#### 9. What could be improved?

Aspects, which the MS could improve:

Stournaras, governor of the Bank of Greece, announced in his speech in March 2017, that next to pensions and the health care system, natural catastrophes are a very sensitive area for policymakers. He argues that it is a policy area, which benefits from the cooperation between the public and private sector and is therefore of high importance for each state to take into consideration. Also, all participants of this cooperation should not depend on short-term goals of the government, but be part of national policies established with long-term perspectives. The terms of the cooperation needed to be clearer and transparent to all members and beneficiaries. Furthermore, proper authorization is of great significance to reach high policy outcomes (Stournaras, 2017, para. 28).

Aspects, which the EU institutions could improve:

One aspect, in regard to Perraudin's article for the Guardian that could be improved, is the transaction of the Fund from the EU to the affected state, so that emergency operations can be processed quicker. Therefore, the European institutions need to improve the administration in order to speed up the granting of the money. Decisions need to be taken faster; after the state has handed in the application for the Fund (Perraudin, 2016). Besides, Wachter stated that the EC did not visit Greece to check up on the case, the spending of the grant and the development of reconstruction (Wachter, 2017). Accordingly, the EC should improve its supervisory role by doing more check-ups on the MS.

## 6.2 Analysis

The following assumptions can be derived from the ex-ante evaluation of the flood in Greece in 2009. First, this case study shows that the administration of the EU institutions is very slow. The ECA has not finished the performance audit on the case yet and other exact data on the spending has also not been published. Thus, it can be mentioned that the institutions need to speed up their working processes. Faster administration of the institutions would mean quicker feedback and consequently, improvements on the Fund can also be made earlier. If the EC would have paid the grant quicker, the MS would be able to implement the grant to avoid management weakness and further consequences of not able to restore the damage caused by the regional disaster.

It is also argued by Stournaras that the objectives of using the grant provided by the EC could be adjusted from short-term goals to long-term goals. This eventually meant that national policy-makers should create policies in which grants, like the grant from the Fund, could be put to use in a long-term fashion. This way solving the problems caused by natural disasters through EU funding would be more durable and effective.

Thus, in order for the Fund to be more effective in providing aid in the shape of a grant, the EC must improve its supervisory role during the process of the spending of the grant as well as reducing the time between accepting a case and providing money for affected MS. Also, national policy-makers and EU institutions should work together on creating policies that can promise a safer future for EU citizens in cases of natural disasters.

## 6.3 Conclusion

From the perspective of the Fund and the EC, the Fund was effective in providing financial aid. According to their guidelines, the case of the two natural disasters was accepted as a regional disaster. Therefore, according to the measurements, the necessary amount of funding was effectively provided by the EC. The policy goals were achieved from the EC's point of view, however, there were remarks on the front of the administration. This led to a delay in receiving funding from the point of view of Greece. This important factor could lead to a slower revalidation process of Greece while affecting the lives of its inhabitants for a longer amount of time. As the performance audit was not yet published, the final effectiveness is yet to be evaluated by future experts and scholars.

## 7. Findings & Analysis: The amendments to the new regulation

7.1 Findings: Have the amendments of the Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of May 2014 improved the European Union Solidarity Fund?

This chapter is dedicated to the findings on the amending regulation of the Fund in 2014. Data was collected from different online sources and additional data from the interview with Wachter was used as well. The findings of the two case studies provided information for a comparison of the effectiveness of the Fund before and after the reform. The following sections will include an overview of the new regulation, the accomplishment, comparison of the two case studies, and last, an analysis and a conclusion will be provided.

### 7.1.1 Overview of the new regulation

Researched by Haase and stated on the EC website, the Fund still needed improvement concerning the implementation of the Fund, which is why a new reform was introduced in 2014 (Haase, 2016). Hochrainer-Stigler and Linnerooth-Bayer, both working for the Risk and Resilience (RISK) program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Austria, and Lorant, who has a degree in natural resource economics and environment management from the Cranfield University in the United Kingdom, wrote a research paper on the assessment of the recent reforms of the Fund. According to them, on behalf of the EC, the Fund does meet its objectives. However, it is only sufficiently responsive as certain criteria are not sufficiently clear and too complex. Firstly, the estimated one-year waiting period from the disaster until the payment of the grant was found to take too long. Secondly, the criteria for regional disasters were not well stated and there was not enough consideration paid to disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, one of the main incentives for the reform was that a relatively high number of applications for the Fund was rejected. One reason leading to this issue could be unclear rules for the funding of extraordinary regional disasters. The EC rejected 45 out of 61 requests for aid of MS affected by this matter from 2002 until 2012. Besides, another reason for the reform of 2014 was the long delay of financial assistance. In order for aid to be granted, four different EC decisions were needed, which could last for a minimum of two to three months. With the new reform, the administration process is supposed to be reduced (Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer & Lorant, 2015).

Also, according to Wachter, one of the main issues was the high number of applications that were refused by the EC. A lot of MS applied for funding, but could not receive the grant of the EU in the end, because the cost of the damage of the natural disaster was not high enough. Consequently, the guidelines of the Fund and requirements for MS to apply and receive the Fund needed improvement (Wachter, 2017).

Referring to Wachter and Haase, therefore, on 25 July 2013, the EC offered a new legislative proposal. This falls under the Ordinary Legislative Procedure and finally resulted in the amending Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of 15 May 2014.

Under the new regulation, new implementation rules were introduced, which are:

- precise scope and eligibility rules
- more importance on mitigation and prevention of the effects of natural disasters
- a faster procedure leading to payment, the introduction of advance payments, and additional time providing for beneficiary countries to use the grants at their disposal (extended from 12 to 18 months)
- budget cut from one billion euros to 500 million euros
- the annual budget of the Fund is available for two years
- an extended time period for the MS to spend the grant: 18 months
- application deadline for MS prolonged from 10 to 12 months
- advanced payment is possible (10 percent) (Wachter, 2017; Haase, 2016).

Article 2 (2) and Article 2 (3) of the new regulation lay down the exact requirements for major and regional disasters.

*“For the purposes of this Regulation, a “major natural disaster” means any natural disaster resulting, in an eligible state, in direct damage estimated either at over EUR 3 000 000 000 in 2011 prices, or more than 0.6% of its GNI”*

(Article 2 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 661/2014)

*“For the purposes of this Regulation, a “regional disaster” means any natural disaster resulting, in a region at NUTS level2 of an eligible State, in direct damage in excess of 1.5 % of that region’s gross domestic product (GDP).”*

(Article 2 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 661/2014)

### 7.1.2 Accomplishment of the new regulation

According to the annual report 2015 by the EC, it is still too early to draw any conclusions on the effectiveness of the amending regulation of 2014. This is stated because the year 2015 was the first year of the Fund's implementation under the rules of the revised regulation; besides because the EC only received a small number of applications since the amendment. Even though the report gives notice that potential applicants have a much clearer indication whether an application is likely to be accepted due to the revised criteria for regional disasters. It is estimated that since the revision, the success rate of applications for regional disasters has been 100 percent. In general, due to the revisions, applicants have a better understanding of what is expected from them in the application process. This saves the EC time on giving additional information before the assessment of the application can be completed and consequently reduces the time spent on administration. On the other hand, the delay between a disaster and the payment still remains an issue. In some cases, applications need to be translated into a working language of the EC, which is time-consuming. This procedure, for instance, still needs improvement (European Commission, 2016). Wachter proofed these statements, by saying that since the reform fewer cases get rejected because of the amendments, which state the requirements clearer. Also, the EC has become quicker in sending the money to the MS by two to three months. Still, he mentioned, that this process could still be improved and should take less time in the future (Wachter, 2017).

In their paper, the researchers Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer and Lorant conclude, that even though the newest reform of the Fund has enhanced the implementation, there is still room for more improvement. Even though the EC has taken vital steps for further advancement, the EC could still be more proactive in fostering risk management in the MS. Furthermore, the three scholars argue that the current reform does not include enough needs-based solidarity. For instance, lower-income MS have received disproportionately less compensation concerning eligible losses. But on average, they have received more disaster aid compared to what they subsidize to the Fund. Accordingly, more solidarity could be improved by changing the directions for disbursing aid. Additionally, one aspect that has improved since the amending regulation is the connection between the Fund and the EU objectives. The aims were stated much clearer and the criteria for regional disasters were improved and simplified. There is also more concentration on contribution for disaster risk management. Besides, the funding rules changed in the recent EU budget.

Before the regulation of 2014, the annual amount available from the MS was one billion euros. Since 2014, the amount is reduced to 500 million euros. At least one-quarter of the annual amount shall remain accessible on 1 October each year to cover any requirements arising for the remainder of that year. The amount that has not been paid out needs to be used in the following year, but not later. In exceptional cases, the amount can also be used for the year after that. However, as the research of the scholars shows, the budget change does not have a particularly positive effect on the Fund. The possibility of depleting the Fund only decreases on a small scale, if multiple natural hazards occur, the stress on the Fund even increases. It should, therefore, be considered to reinstate the budget to one billion euros, as implemented in the previous regulation (Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer & Lorant, 2015).

Moreover, the annual report of the EC announced that the three applications received in 2015 were executed successfully, also with regard to the new provision on advance payments. One of these applications was the request of Greece due to the severe flooding in the beginning of 2015 (European Commission, 2016). According to Haase, on 14 September 2016, the EC also handed in another proposal, offering simplified transfer and mobilization procedures. The proposal is negotiated under the Ordinary Legislative Procedure; further procedures still have to be enhanced by the EP and the Council (Haase, 2016). Thus, it is expected that further amendments will take place to improve the implementation of the Fund.

## 7.1.3 Comparison of the two case studies

Figure 2: Comparison case study Italy and case study Greece		
	<b>Case study Italy</b>	<b>Case study Greece</b>
<i>Annual budget of the Fund</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one billion euros</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 million euros</li> </ul>
<i>Deadline for MS to apply for the Fund</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 weeks</li> </ul>
<i>Time period for MS to spent the grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 months</li> </ul>
<i>Payment of grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC provided grant within the accepted amount of time according to the implementation agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC provided grant within the accepted amount of time according to the implementation agreement.</li> </ul>
<i>Supervisory role EC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No regulation during the spending of the grant.</li> <li>• Infringement procedure was invoked by EC after spending entire grant.</li> <li>• Italy was found not to be guilty concerning infringement procedure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No regulation during the spending of the grant.</li> </ul>

Figure 2: Comparison case study Italy and case study Greece

From *Figure 2* it can be concluded that both cases have the same outcome, however, the Italy case is more complicated. At that moment, the Fund had significantly different amounts of financial resources available. Still, the case study of Greece showed that after the budget cut, enough financial resources are available to provide aid for reconstruction purposes. Before the reform, Italy had only 10 weeks in order to apply for the Fund, while Greece had 12 weeks to send the application. Moreover, Greece had more time in order to use the grant. While Italy had only one year, Greece had 18 months to spend it. Besides, the payment in both cases was granted by the EC on time, but the process still took too long, even after the reform in 2014. Yet, Greece had the possibility to apply for an advanced payment, which is only possible since the reform and can be seen as a great improvement for the affected MS. In both cases, the EC did not check up enough on the spending and should have taken its supervisor role more seriously. In the Italy case, the EC visited the affected region, even though, the case resulted in an infringement procedure, in which Italy was finally not found guilty. Greece was not visited by the EC at all, only the final report of the MS for the EC and the performance audit of the ECA will show whether the grant was spent according to the agreement.

## 7.2 Analysis

Several assumptions can be made from the findings on the new regulation of the Fund and the comparison of the earthquake in L'Aquila 2009 and the flood in Greece in 2015. Primary, it could be argued, that the high number of cases, which the EC had to reject before the reform, was due to the unclear scope and rules of the Fund. A lot of MS applied, even though they were not able to receive funding because the cost of the damage of the disaster was not high enough. Also, institutions could have been considered as not showing solidarity to the MS, because they would not accept the cases and accordingly would not provide any financial help. Nevertheless, since the amendments clearly set the requirements for natural disasters to be considered as a regional or major disaster, the EC barely rejects any cases. This is a great achievement for the institution because it saves time spent on administration. Furthermore, the accusation of not showing solidarity cannot be made anymore, as the EC nearly accepts all applications for funding. Therefore, clearly stating the requirements to the MS for applying for funding can be seen as one of the most successful amendments of the new regulation.

Besides, it could be claimed that since the reform, the MS can hardly still misunderstand the Fund. The case study of Italy shows, that Italy and other scholars and experts misunderstood the Fund as a grant providing financial aid for long-term reconstruction and recovery. Yet, the Fund is only a financial instrument, which provides a grant for emergency operations and short-term reconstruction. Since this is now clearly stated in the new regulation, the MS should be aware that the Fund only has a short-term impact on aid for reconstruction.

The extension of the time period for the MS to spend the grant from 12 to 18 months is another successful amendment. This extension can also be claimed as an extension of the effectiveness of the Fund. Hence, this amendment enhanced the effectiveness of the Fund from one year to 18 months.

On the one hand, the annual budget cut from one billion euros to 500 million euros can be seen as a great impact on the Fund. Moreover, since the reform, the financial resources can be considered as rather short. Yet, the case study of Greece demonstrates that the Fund still has enough financial resources to help affected MS. That could be explained by the new regulation allowing the EC to use the annual budget for two years. Thus, because the remaining budget from one year, can still be spent in the next one, the budget cut can, on the other hand, be considered as not having much influence on the financial aspect of the Fund.

Additionally, both case studies show, that the EC still needs to improve its role as a supervisor; even after the reform of 2014. In the case study of Italy, an infringement procedure was started, which can be argued as a hint for the EC to do more check-ups on the spending of the grant and more regular visits of the affected MS. However, also in the case study of Greece, the EC still did not provide a lot of supervision. The institutions did not visit the MS once; whether the money was spent correctly will only be seen when Greece hands in their report and the ECA finalizes the performance audit. Consequently, it could be said that the EC did not use the case of L'Aquila to improve its supervisory role. Yet, more check-ups should have been done in order to ensure the correct spending of the Fund in the case of Greece and to prohibit future infringement procedures.

Lastly, the EC can use the two case studies as an example for future improvement. Also, the institution can consider feedback from the MS who received and used the Fund for more effectiveness and considerably another reform of the Fund.

### 7.3 Conclusion

Even though not a lot of time has passed since the reform and only a small number of MS was provided with the grant since 2014, immense development can be seen concerning the effectiveness. A major improvement is the small number of rejected cases from the EC, besides the annual budget was cut by half, the transaction of the grant is faster and the requirements for receiving the grant are clearer. Nevertheless, upgrading the Fund is still needed on behalf of the time spent on progressing the grant by the EC. Furthermore, the Greece case study shows that the EC still needs to improve its supervisory role. Yet, the amendments of the Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of May 2014 have improved the effectiveness of the Fund.

## 8. Conclusion

This section is devoted to the conclusion of this research, focusing on the effectiveness of the European Union Solidarity Fund. This dissertation consulted secondary data provided by books, websites of the EU, online articles and reports and one structured and one unstructured interview with professionals. The literature review, presented in Chapter 2, provided the general information on the two case studies used for this research, the applied theory of new-institutionalism and the implementation and evaluation phase of the EU policy cycle. Following, the methodology chapter outlined how the consulted data and interviews with the two experts supported the research in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Fund. The findings sections provided the outcome of the secondary data and the interviews, followed by an analysis after each findings section. All chapters led to the conclusion presented below, including the answer to the central research question, of *“How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?”*

This research shows, that the Fund is effective in providing financial aid for emergency and short-term reconstruction operations of up to 18 months in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU. However, the Fund is not effective in providing long-term reconstruction aid (more than 18 months) for MS, which were affected by a natural disaster. The findings on the implementation measures of the Fund demonstrate, that it is a financial support instrument, implemented as a regulation under cohesion policy, providing a grant to MS that were affected by a natural disaster. The policy goals are to send the grant to the MS, and the MS needs to spend it within the given time period. The answer to the central research question became clear by answering the second sub-question, of how much impact the Fund has on financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the EU. This sub-question included a policy evaluation of two case studies, the first one examined the effectiveness of the Fund concerning the earthquake in L’Aquila in 2009, while the second one inspected the flood in Greece in 2015. Both case studies were chosen because one of the cases demonstrates a major disaster, while the other one was accepted by the EC as a regional disaster. Furthermore, the earthquake in L’Aquila occurred before the Fund was reformed; the flood in Greece came into place after the new regulation in 2014.

The ex-ante evaluation of the case study of L'Aquila, reveals, that the Fund is only effective in providing financial aid for emergency and short-term reconstructions. The EC provided a financial aid to Italy, which the MS had to spend in the time frame of one year, any financial costs for long-term reconstructions are the responsibility of the MS. Yet, the policy goals of sending the grant and spending the money by the MS in the given time were achieved and the Fund can, therefore, be claimed as effective. Even though, the case exposed, that improvement on the implementation was needed in order for the Fund to be more effective. The second case study presents, that from the EC's point of view, policy goals were so far achieved because the institution sent the grant to the affected MS. Nevertheless, it still needs to be concluded whether Greece spent the grant according to the implementation agreement and within the given time frame because the ECA has not finalized the performance audit yet. Furthermore, the third sub-question includes the accomplishments of the new regulation and a comparison of the two case studies confirms. The reform has improved the effectiveness of the Fund, among other developments, it enhanced its effectiveness from one year to 18 months. However, it can be mentioned, that the administration of the institutions still needs to be quicker and that the EC should improve its supervisory role. In total, it can be concluded that the Fund is effective in providing financial aid for MS in emergency and short-term reconstruction operations of up to 18 months.

## 9. Recommendations

The Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of May 2014 already improved the effectiveness of the Fund. Yet, the ex-ante evaluations of the two case studies show, that rules and modalities for the granting of reconstruction aid for affected MS still need improvement. Thus, several recommendations for the improvement of the Fund can be made:

1. Since the new regulation, the annual budget of the Fund was reduced to 500 million euros. The second case study showed, that despite the budget cut, the Fund still had enough financial resources to help Greece. But climate is changing and natural disasters are increasing. Therefore, it is recommended to consider to increase the annual budget again.
2. The EU institutions could offer the MS an incentive to pay more into the Fund to increase the annual budget. The incentive could be that the Fund does not only offer financial aid for emergency operations and short-term reconstruction, but also for long-term reconstruction aid (longer than 18 months)
3. The EC should offer the MS more guidance in long-term goals for reconstruction and recover after the natural disaster. The Fund should be altered by the EC and other EU institutions to provide funding for durable long-term reconstruction aid.
4. According to Søndergaard, the institutions should encourage the MS to improve their emergency preparedness to reach timely and cost-effective assistance and furthermore, promote MS to take better care of the economy regarding the design and implementation of emergency projects (Søndergaard, 2013).
5. Moreover, Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer, and Lorant recommend that the EC could still be more proactive in fostering risk management in the MS (Hochrainer-Stigler, Linnerooth-Bayer & Lorant, 2015).
6. Both case studies show, that the EC should exercise its role as a supervisor to a fuller extent during the time period that the grant is spent. The EC should visit each country which receives the grant in order to discuss and check upon the spending. Also, the EC could request the MS for more reports on the spending, and besides, do more evaluations on the cases.
7. Suggested by Sergi, more and stricter controls on the spending within the local territory are necessary. These should be performed by local policy actors (Sergi, 2017).

8. The case study of Greece shows, that the process of paying out the grant to the MS takes too long. Wachter recommends that the EC should process the grant faster (Wachter, 2017). Also, the EC stated that the translation of applications into working languages of the EC takes too much time as well (European Commission, 2016). Thus, the time spent by the EU institutions on administration needs to be reduced. If more money would be invested in the employees that take care of the administration of the Fund, the procedure could be performed within a shorter period of time.
9. Besides, more solidarity should be encouraged between the MS and the EU institutions to improve the directions for disbursing aid.
10. Regarding the implementation of cohesion policy, the case study of L'Aquila shows, that the partnership principal should be reconsidered. The EU institutions might need to take more policy actions and give the MS fewer responsibilities and freedom in the decision-making process.

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## 11. Appendices

### 11.1 Interview Transcript with Anna Sergi

Interview Transcript with Anna Sergi, Organised Crime Expert from the University of Essex

Question 1: Has the Fund been effective in financial aid for reconstruction operations in L'Aquila?

Anna Sergi:

*Not really effective as the reconstruction is very slow and impaired by bureaucracy and by slow process.*

Question 2: What did work out effectively? /What not?

Anna Sergi:

*The main problem as I saw it is that the Fund only provide temporary relief and not long-term reconstruction plans, they include packages for immediate restoration, quick clean up and certainly temporary accommodation, but no long-term solutions. Which means the Italian state has to provide the long-term solutions also on the basis of the short-term influx of funds, which did not seem to have happened.*

Question 3: What were the reasons for the effectiveness/ineffectiveness?

Anna Sergi:

*I cannot add anything to the question as I said above, as I said the main problem as I saw it is related to the fact that the Italian state declared the state of emergency, the money arrived as relief fund, but still it was administered by local authorities deemed ok to receive the funds. There were structural problems, including corruption and mafia infiltration that did not make the procedure work smoothly. However, the monitoring system of the EU Commission did not seem to pick that up in their checks. As always, the main problems is that controls from Brussels are not effective because at the local levels there is misconduct or simple slowness in proceedings.*

Question 4: Was the Italian Mafia or other criminal organisations involved in the spending of the granted money of the EU?

Anna Sergi:

*There were many Italian mafia groups involved, especially the 'Ndrangheta, but not in the access to EU money but rather in their involvement in the local administration of funds. This is not new, it happens all the time, because the criminal groups are already present in the area for other reasons, ie. drugs, and they have the cash to invest in the contracts as the contracts become available.*

Question 5: How exactly was the Mafia involved?

Anna Sergi:

*There is not One Mafia. We are talking about different clans especially of the Ndrangheta, already present in Abruzzo and involved in political corruption and contracts for construction. Mainly construction is the way in, through winning of tenders and bets and being able to control the allocation of work through subcontracts (companies controlled directly or indirectly by the clans) and through infiltration in the local administration.*

Question 6: How could the Fund be improved to help effectively for reconstruction operations?

Anna Sergi:

*I suppose by improving the controls on the local territory based on the actual transparency of proceedings before assigning the funds and during the administration of the funds through people who understand the territory and not bureaucrats from Brussels.*

11.2 Informed Consent Form Anna Sergi

## Informed Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title: The effectiveness of the EU Solidarity Fund
- 2) Project Description: The research question of this report is: "How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?" The aim of answering this question is to find out if the Fund is effective enough to financially help the affected Member State to cope with natural disasters. It is believed that this specific research will help to find out if there is still room for improvement and what needs to be changed in order to enhance the Fund for Member States in need.

**If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.**

**I am 16 years of age or older.**

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: 

Date: \_25.08.2017

Dr Anna Sergi  
Lecturer in Criminology  
University of Essex, UK

## 11.3 Interview Transcript with Johannes Wachter

Interview Transcript with Johannes Wachter, Senior Expert of the EU Solidarity Fund, in Brussels, Belgium.

Johannes Wachter:

*Das ist ein ganz spannendes Thema und Sie haben auch zwei relativ extreme Fälle ausgewählt. L'Aquila war zu dem Zeitpunkt die größte Katastrophe. Inzwischen haben wir noch ein paar Größere, alles Fälle in Italien, alles Erdbeben. Ein Fall drei Jahre später und einen im August letztes Jahr mit einer Serie von Erdbeben. Mit dieser Serie von Erdbeben sind wir jetzt bei 23 Milliarden Schäden, mehr als wir jemals hatten. Dadurch haben wir das erste Mal einen Betrag von über einer Milliarde. Der Fond ist strikt beschränkt auf Naturkatastrophen, Tierseuchen sind nicht mit einbezogen. 2002 hatten wir in Deutschland, Tschechien, Österreich, schwere Überschwemmungen. Irgendjemand kam auf den Gedanken: da müsse doch auch Europa was tun. Sehr große Katastrophe, dann kam politisch der Ruf laut: da müsse doch auch Europa etwas tun und dann stellte man relativ schnell fest das es dafür weder Geld im Europäischen Haushalt, noch ein Rechtsinstrument gibt. Dadurch wurde der Fond geschaffen, es wurde einfach beschlossen. Es wurde gesagt, wir können kein Instrument schaffen das nur für die Mitgliedsstaaten (MS) funktioniert, das ist immer problematisch, weil es in der EU verschiedenen Ausgabenbereiche gibt. Der Binnenbrich und der Drittstaatenbereich. Hier haben wir jetzt ein Instrument das sowohl im Inneren der MS als auch über die Grenzen hinaus funktioniert. Deswegen haben wir auch zwei Haushaltslinien, eine für die auswärtigen Aktionen und eine für die Inneren Aktionen. Also Auch Kandidatenländer, aber man wollte das beschränken aber nur die, die in Beitrittsverhandlungen stehen. Die, die schon offiziell verhandeln, Tschechien war damals schon dabei, die Türkei immer noch, Island war zwischenzeitig dabei, Serbien und Montenegro. Wir haben dann also die strikte Festlegung auf Natur Katastrophen, das hat unter anderem auch mit der finanziellen Seite zu tun, weil man einfach die Ausgabenseite begrenzen wollte. Man will einerseits solidarisch sein aber möglichst wenig dafür bezahlen müssen. Das Ganze funktioniert so, dass zusätzlich zum normalen Europäischen Haushalt wir die Möglichkeit haben Mittel abzurufen. Der Fond hat kein eigenes Geld. Wir haben aber ein Bezugsrecht. Das sind Mittel, die wir maximal bei Bedarf abrufen können. Bis zur Reform hatten wir eine Milliarde in fixen Preisen, seit dem neuen MFF haben wir 500 Millionen. Jedes Jahr kommt ungefähr 2 Prozent dazu. Und was wir früher nicht hatten, die Möglichkeit, im davorliegenden Jahr nicht abgerufenen Mittel ins nächste Jahr zu übertragen. Die müssen dann ausgegeben werden, aber wir haben diese Mittel über 2 Jahre zur Verfügung. Das war früher nicht. Insofern, macht jetzt diese Halbierung der Finanzmittel,*

*ist nicht ganz so dramatisch wie sie klingt. Aber sie ist trotzdem ein Problem und ein eindeutiges Zeichen dafür das die MS mit der Solidarität nicht ganz so ernst sehen. Dann hat man gesagt, das Instrument soll in gewisser Weise funktionieren wie die Strukturpolitik. Aber eben nur in Gewisser Weise, eine Leitversion. Wir haben keine Programmierungsdokumente, wir haben keine Co-Finanzierung, wir haben keine Begleitausschüsse. Aber was wir haben, wir haben das Grundprinzip der Strukturpolitik. Nämlich das sogenannte Shared Management (SM). Der Fond ist kein Strukturfond. Es gibt viele Ähnlichkeiten, aber die Regeln der Strukturfonds gelten nicht. SM heißt, im Prinzip das die Kommission unter bestimmten Auflagen das Geld zur Verfügung stellt. Die MS das Geld ausgeben, an Hand eines vorher festgelegten Rahmens, und dann der Kommission Bericht erstatten. Also sie führen es durch, sie führen die Projekte durch, sie prüfen, auditieren die Ausgaben auch und berichten dann der Kommission. Wir haben auch keine ständige Begleitung, wir gehen zwar nach Möglichkeit die Fälle besuchen, und diskutieren wie der Fortschritt ist aber das ist kein formales Gremium. Wir zahlen hundert Prozent auf einmal aus, da habt ihr eure Euros und jetzt macht mal schön. Die MS können da so dann verwenden, in einem Rahmen den wir gemeinsam festlegen aber retroaktiv ab dem Eintritt der Katastrophe. Also vom ersten Schaden an. Wenn dann Maßnahmen ergriffen werden, dann können die Refinanziert werden. Das Geld fließt sehr spät, vor 2014 noch später. Eines der Bemühen war, den Prozess ein bisschen schneller zu machen. Das ist bedingt gelungen. Trotzdem kommt das Geld viele Monate, ein Jahr fast nach der Katastrophe. Deswegen wird das Geld ist rückwirkend verwendet, für die Projekte und Maßnahmen die schon durchgeführt sind und wo man feststellen kann ob die die Förderfähigkeitskriterien erfüllen. Wir kriegen immer wieder Fragen, warum dauert das so lange. Der Antrag kommt nach 12 Wochen, der kam früher nach 10, eine der Änderungen in der neuen Verordnung. Wir haben die Durchführungsperiode auf 18 Monate ausgedehnt, weil in der Vergangenheit war es das das eine Jahr kaum reicht um massiveres zu machen. Und dann haben sie noch 6 Monate um zu berichten und die halten sie auch oft nicht ein. Wir können sie nicht bestrafen, wollen wir auch nicht. Dafür ist das Instrument nicht gedacht, wir haben ja schon alles ausgezahlt. Der Fond ist kein Rapid Respond Instrument. Es ist eher ein Finanzinstrument, eine zweckgerichtete Budgethilfe. Der MS hat mehr ausgeben und wir stellen Geld zur Verfügung. Das sind Maßnahmen, die würde der MS so oder so machen. Denn die Förderfähigkeitsmöglichkeiten sind eng. Man kann nur einen kleinen Teil der erforderlichen Nothilfe und Wiederaufbau Maßnahmen refinanzieren oder finanzieren. Eine Reihe von Maßnahmen, je nach dem was die auswählen, würden auch erst angegangen wenn das Geld kommt. Infrastrukturmaßnahmen brauchen in der Regel länger. Wenn amn unmittelbare aufräummaßnahmen oder Hilfsdienst dann geht es schneller. Es ist eine*

*Budgethilfe, insofern sind solche Fragen wie „hat man das Ziel erreicht“, die sind berechtigt, aber letztendlich geht es dem MS darum den Teil der Finanzleistung durch die Katastrophe besser zu bewältigen. Es gibt einen gewissen Widerspruch. Der Solidaritätsgedanke, Europa soll was machen, Geld geben, wenn der MS an seine finanziellen Grenzen gerät. Das sind dann die Major Disaster. Mit dem Schwellenwert von 0.6 % und 3 Milliarden. Dieses doppelte Kriterium, die großen MS, erheblich bevorzugt. 0,6 % des BSP von Deutschland ist irgendwo, 18 Milliarden, so viele Schäden hat Deutschland noch wie gehabt und wird es auch nie haben das es jemals in den Genuss des Fonds gekommen wäre. Italien ähnlich. Vielleicht sind es dann nur 12, dafür hätten die nie was bekommen.*

Inken Brendel:

*Also die großen MS sind bevorzugt?*

Johannes Wachter:

*Ja. Eindeutig. Es ist widersprüchlich und eine Ungleichbehandlung. Eine Beachtung der nicht ganz so großen. Wir haben dieses doppelte Kriterium, weil wir eine EU haben die heterogen ist. Sie haben Staaten wie Luxemburg, oder Malta, mit einem BSP wie eine Stadt und dann haben sie die großen MS. Man kann also nicht ein einfaches Kriterium haben. Es sollte ein Einfaches sein, das für all vernünftig wirkt. Entweder kriegen die kleinen nie was oder die großen nie was. Aber man kriegt das nicht hin, deswegen haben wir das doppelte Kriterium und das widerspiegelt europäische Realitäten. Und die großen MS sind die, die das finanzieren, im Prinzip geht der Haushaltskommissar danach jeder Katastrophe mit dem Hut zu den MS und sagt: euren Beitrag bitte. Italien hat jetzt 1,2 Milliarden, euren Anteil. Und das entspricht prozentual dem Anteil den die MS in den EU Haushalt einzahlen. Und da zahlen die großen am meisten. Insofern hat es eine gewisse Berechtigung. Anders könnte man so ein Instrument nicht auflegen. Können sie für die Masterarbeit drüber nachdenken ob Sie das entwickeln wollen, ein neues Kriterium, ein Kriterium auf alles MS. Ist sicher schwierig. Die Major Disaster sind das eigentliche Motiv, hier ist es sinnvoll zu sagen, erreicht eure Grenzen, da hilft euch Europa. Jetzt haben wir aber auch die regionalen Katastrophen. Das ist so ein typisches Produkt, der Griechische Fall ist eine Regionale Katastrophe, L'Aquila ist ein Major Disaster. Die regionalen Disaster sind das typische Ergebnisse eines politischen Prozesses. Wo unterschiedliche Kräfte und stimmen mit einfließen in so einen Europäischen Entscheidungsprozess. Man hat gesagt, es müsse flexibel sein. Es müsste vorstellbar sein, das auch eine Katastrophe die nicht den Major Disaster Schwellenwert erreicht wirklich ganz schlimm ist. Ich muss dann feststellen ob das dann wirklich schwerwiegende Auswirkungen auf die wirtschaftliche Stabilität hat. Das ist*

*sehr schwierig. Das war das größte Problem mit dem Fond, mit den regionalen Katastrophen zurecht zu kommen. Wir bekamen Anträge über Anträge. Viele Anträge wo die Schäden minimal waren. Wir haben da versucht nachvollziehbare Kriterien anzulegen. Das war die Hauptschwierigkeit und das führt auch dazu das 2/3 der Anträge der regionalen Katastrophen abgelehnt wurden vor der Reform. Vor der reform hatten wir 1/3 der Anträge für Major Desasters 100 % Erfolgsquote. 2/3 Anträge von regionalen Katastrophen sind abgelehnt worden. Das ist keine gute Sache. Das ist politisch extrem schwierig. Die Regierungen gehen dann immer gleich an die Öffentlichkeit. Und dann heißt es Brüssel hat es abgelehnt, wir sind nicht solidarisch. Das ist für die MS schlecht, für die betroffenen Menschen ist es schlecht, für uns ist das Arbeit und ein schlechtes Image. Der wesentliche Punkt an der Reform 2014 war das wir damit aufräumen wollten, das Ergebnis ist das wir jetzt ein ganz einfaches, schlichtes Kriterium haben. Wir haben da lange drüber nachgedacht, bis wir zu dem jetzt Kriterium 1,5 % des regionalen BIPs haben. Auch hier gibt es Probleme. Die Region ist definiert wie wir in der Strukturpolitik Regionen definieren. Nämlich nach NUTS und wir benutzen NUTS 2, das ist auch für die Strukturfonds. Auch innerhalb der MS gibt es starke regionale Unterschiede aber die Probleme sind anerkannt. Jetzt zu Ihren Fällen. Haben Sie mir die Fragen aus einem speziellen Grund nur für Griechenland oder für beide?*

Inken Brendel:

*Es sind die gleichen Fragen*

Johannes Wachter:

*Was steckt hinter dieser Aufgliederung in die Ex-ante, Mid-term und Ex-post?*

Inken Brendel:

*Das ist was ich gefunden habe was die EU benutzt um die policies zu evaluieren und so habe ich die Fragen übernommen.*

Johannes Wachter:

*Für den Bereich der Strukturpolitik gehen wir so vor. Vor der Programmierung macht der MS eine Ex-ante Evaluierung. Wir verwenden diese Art der Systematik nicht für den EUSF. Wir machen Evaluierungen, man muss auch immer schauen was die politischen Ziele sind. Wir machen es jetzt nicht auf einen einzelnen Fall bezogen, sondern den EUSF von 2002 bis Ende 2016 lassen wir eine Firma Ausschreibungen gemacht und jetzt wird eine große Evaluierung durchgeführt. Wir haben auch nicht selbst, aber zum Beispiel hat der*

*europäische Rechnungshof einmal generell 2008 eine performance audit gemacht. Das ist eine Art von Evaluierung.*

*Dann haben sie sich den Fall L'Aquila vorgenommen. Ansonsten findet keine systematisierte Evaluierung einzelner Fälle statt. Das hat auch sehr damit zu tun, weil der Fond in dem Sinne keine policy ist. Wir haben auch keine policy objectives, die meisten Dinge die die EU macht, das ist verbunden mit politischen Zielen. Das ist bei dem Fond etwas anders. Da Ziel ist einem von einer Naturkatastrophe heimgesuchten Staat ein bisschen finanziell unter die Arme zu leisten. Wir sagen zwar im Prinzip wofür das Geld ausgegeben werden darf, in großen Zügen, in der Verordnung steht, Artikel 3, Absatz 2, a,b,c,d, aber das war es dann auch schon. Wir führen zwar Prüfungen durch, wir haben eine ganze Direktion die sich mit den Audits, der finanzkontrolle der strukturfonde befasst. Die prüfen jedes Jahr mindestens einen Fall, wenn er abgeschlossen ist, also ex-post. Aber das ist eine Finanzkontrolle das ist keine Evaluierung. Das ist klassische Finanzkontrolle. Ob sie die Rahmenbedingungen eingehalten haben, ob sie das public procurement richtiggemacht haben. Die große Evaluierung fängt jetzt erst an, das Ergebnis liegt wahrscheinlich nicht vor einem Jahr vor. Diese Fragen stellen wir so nicht. Sondern, der Approach ist ziemlich banal. Der MS hat eine Katastrophe, wenn es ein Major Disaster ist, ist es meistens ziemlich eindeutig. Da sind im von vorne herein klar das die Bedingungen erfüllt sind. Es ist ja nur ein banales Kriterium, nämlich Schäden oberhalb des Schwellenwertes. Und dann guckt man wie man das Geld möglichst schnell nach Italien kriegt. Man schaut das die Italiener es vernünftig verwenden. Da gab es bei L'Aquila ein paar Fragen, eine Reihe an fragen die der Rechnungshof auch aufgehoben hat. Obwohl wir damit nicht in jedem Fall einverstanden waren. Das war die Gelegenheit beider reform diese Punkte dann zu klären. Der Rechnungshof hat zum Beispiel kritisiert das die Gebäude für die provisorische Unterbringung von knapp 20.000 Menschen gar kein provisional housing sei, sondern es sei ja permanent housing, wenn das über Jahre genutzt werden könne, können wir von provisorisch nicht mehr sprechen. Es wäre sogar möglich das damit Einkommen erzielt werde. Das hat uns dazu geführt, dass wir in die Verordnung neu reingeschrieben haben, das provisional heißt, das ist so lange bis die Menschen wieder in ihre ursprünglichen Häuser zurückkehren können. Und das dauert im Fall von L'Aquila dann mal 10 Jahre. Das dauert in Italien generell ein bisschen länger aber in dem Fall gibt es auch objektive Kriterien warum das so lange dauert.*

*Als ob ein MS irgendeinen Gewinn machen könnte. Er kann vielleicht für eine Einzelmaßnahme, provisorische Unterbringung, Notunterkünfte, mit diesem Punkt kostendeckend oder vielleicht kann er sogar etwas einnehmen, kommt ganz selten vor. Wenn man die Infrastruktur wiederherrichtet, macht man keinen Gewinn. Hier waren es große Häuser, Häuserblocks, wurden auch zum Teil an Studenten vermietet. aber der MS hat insgesamt natürlich viel höhere Ausgaben als dass was der Fond insgesamt zahlen kann. Wie gesagt 6 %. Er hat als viel mehr Ausgaben als er von uns kriegt. Deswegen kann von Revenue nicht die Rede sein, deswegen haben wir jetzt reingeschrieben, Revenue seinen nur dann nicht zulässig, wenn es mehr ist als die gesamte Belastung des Staates. Der Gedanke ist dem financial burden zu erleichtern. Und wenn er dann durchs vermieten durch Unterkünfte ein paar Euro mehr verdient als was er in dieses Projekt hat reinstecken müssen, dann soll es grad recht sein.*

*Wir sehen, die Katstrophe ist passiert. Wir tun zuerst mal nichts. Das wird auch immer wieder befragt, warum mobilisiert die Kommission den Fond nicht. Wir können nicht, wir brauchen einen Antrag. Wir versuchen mit dem MS das im Vorfeld zu besprechen. Um zu klären, könnte es sinnvoll sein einen Antrag zu stellen. Wir unterstützen die dann bei der Antragsformulierung. Die policy goals sind eindeutig, es geht darum, dem MS finanziell unter die Arme zu greifen. Das ist grundsetzlich. Have all ways of achieving these goals been completely analysed? Da müsste man, für den Fond gibt es die Frage so auch nicht. Er wird entweder benutzt oder nicht. Das steht dem MS frei er muss zwar prüfen ob er ausreichende Schäden hat und dann stellt er einen Antrag und dann kriegt er Geld. Die Kommission hat tatsächlich hier was unternommen, wir haben die Strukturfond Verordnung angepasst um im Fall einer Katastrophe wie in L'Aquila Strukturfondmittel für den Wiederaufbau speziell zur Verfügung zu stellen. Kein zusätzliches Geld, aber mit einer auf 5 % reduzierten nationalen Kofinanzierung. Also wir haben dann einen Kofinanzierungsanteil von 95% der Strukturfonds für einen Teil eines solchen Regionalprogrammes das dann eben auf den Wiederaufbau nach der Katastrophe und der Wiederbelebung der Wirtschaft abzielt. Das ist ein ganz konkretes Ergebnis. Weil man gesehen hat das man bei schwerwiegenden Vorkommnisse das man da mehr tun muss. Da sind auch die 1,2 Milliarden aus dem Fond nicht genug. Und der Fond kann auch keine Maßnahmen ergreifen um die ankurbelnde Wirtschaft zu fördern. Wir machen nur ganz strikt Wiederaufbau.*

*Cost und benefits. Ich verstehe wie Sie es meinen, aber weiß nicht wie ich es auf diesen Fall anwenden kann. Für den MS könnte man sagen, so ein Antragsprozess ist eigentlich zu aufwendig für die paar Kröten die man kriegt. Mir wäre kein Fall bewusst, wo nach einer Katastrophe, wenn die Bedingungen ausreichend waren, die MS kennen Antrag gestellt haben. Also ist offenbar die Belastung des Antrag Stellens und Durchführung und Berichterstattung die dann erfolgt vergleichsweise gering. In der Vergangenheit haben wir sehr viel stärker noch Anträge bekommen wo eigentlich klar sein müsste das es nichts werden kann. Trotzdem hat der MS es wirklich nichts unversucht gelassen sowohl auf administrative als auch auf politischer Ebene zu versuchen Solidarität Fond Mittel zu bekommen. Ich gehe davon aus das die Cost Benefit Geschichte in der Regel erfüllt ist. Für die großen MS ist die Frage, in wie weit sich das Instrument finanziell lohnt. Jeder MS zahlt für jeden Fall einen Anteil am Haushalt. Für die kleineren Staaten lohnt es sich auf jeden Fall. Sie kriegen Geld, wenn bei Ihnen was passiert und wenn bei anderen was passiert, dann zahlen sie zwar aber das ist minimal. Die Großen zahlen immer, und manche von denen kriegen aber nichts zurück. Bei den Italienern lohnt es sich. Italien ist mit Abstand unser größter Empfänger. Irgendwo ist es ein Null-Summen spiel. Deswegen hat man 2014 dann das Gesamtvolumen etwas reduziert. Das hat auch damit zu tun wie viel wir im Schnitt ausbezahlt haben. Man darf diese 500 Millionen nicht als ausgabenziel betrachten. Nichts ist schlimmer für einen Politikbereich als wenn de zur Verfügung gestellten Mittel nicht verausgabt werden. Die 500 Millionen sind eine absolute Obergrenze. Im Prinzip müssen die MS froh sein, wenn wir wenig abrufen. Tatsächlich ist es eine lohnenswerte Politik. Rein Haushaltstechnisch gesehen, die ist nicht für jeden gleich. Dieser Solidaritätsgedanke ist was ja vergleichsweise positiv konvertiert ist. Insofern überlegt sich dann auch ein Staat der mehr einzahlt als er rauskriegt ob es sich politisch auszahlt an so etwas beteiligt zu sein.*

*Haben wir genügend Ressourcen? Oder ob die benefits die Kosten übersteigen? Das ist auch eine Frage ob man es rein finanziell sieht. Es ist eine gewisse Rückversicherung. Haben wir genügend Ressourcen? Ja und nein. Wenn man mal den rahmen den wir haben als gegeben ansieht, dann haben wir im Prinzip genug, weil wir das nämlich so managen das es reicht. Das ist eine unserer Aufgaben. Wir haben überlegt, was sind die Maximal zu erwartenden Schäden pro Jahr. Mit was für Schäden kann man rechnen. Das und das, dafür soll das Geld reichen. Und dann haben wir überlegt, ok, so und so viel können wir geben. Wir haben ganz viele Modellrechnungen gemacht, einerseits soll die Hilfe nicht insignifikant sein. Andererseits, sollen die Mittel nicht ausgehen, die sollen reichen auch in einem denkbar sehr schlimmen Fall. Und dann haben wir das so ausgerechnet, auch so, das nicht nur die Größe der Katastrophe Berücksichtigung findet, sondern auch Leistungsfähigkeit*

*des Staates. Die Art wie wir berechnen wer was kriegt, berücksichtigt Alles das. Zum einen, ist der Zugang zum Fond, die Schwellenwerte sind verschieden hoch, andererseits ist das was wir ausbezahlen hängt auch von der relativen Prosperität des MS ab. Insofern wird auch für einen gewissen Ausgleich gesorgt. Wir machen es passend. Wenn uns der Rat 2020 sagt, jetzt bekommt ihr nur noch 200 Millionen, dann haben wir ein Problem. Im Moment kommen wir einigermaßen hin. Womit wir nicht hinkommen würden, sind andere Dinge. Wenn man beispielsweise nicht nur Infrastruktur wiederherrichtet, sondern verbessert, oder überhaupt Preventations Maßnahmen, dafür haben wir das Geld nicht. Dafür gibt es andere Politikbereiche. Wir beschränken uns auf das Mindestmaßrecht. Das wird immer wieder kritisiert. Aber dafür sind die Ressourcen unzureichend. Wofür sie auch nicht zureichend sind ist den Fond auszuweiten, auf andere Katastrophen.*

*Wir haben bewusst bei der 2014 Reform den Vorschlag gemacht, darauf verzichtet, irgendwas Haushaltswirksames darein zu schreiben. Also wir waren ganz bedacht darauf, dass alle Änderungen nicht zu mehr Ausgaben führen. Wir haben diesen Schwellenwert von 1,5 ganz bewusst gewählt, weil der alle Fälle aufgegriffen hätte. Die Abgelehnten wären auch unter diesen 1,5 % Kriterium alle abgelehnt worden.*

*Jetzt zu dem Mittelteil, mid-term evaluation. Wird die Politik durchgeführt wie vorgesehen? Das wissen wir nicht. Jedenfalls nicht während es läuft; zumindest nicht bis wir einen unserer visits gemacht haben. Aber die finden nicht in allen Fällen statt und sind auch nicht institutionalisiert. Die geben einen gewissen Einblick. Um den zu kriegen, wenn wir das Gefühl kriegen wir können nicht eineinhalb Jahre warten. Oder 2, bis der Bericht, ohne zu wissen was da läuft oder falsch machen. Deswegen machen wir die, aber in dem Fall was Griechenland angeht haben wir keinen gemacht. Und ich weiß auch nicht was die Griechen machen. Muss man ganz ehrlich sagen, und der Schlussbericht liegt noch nicht zur Verwendung. Das Prinzip SM heißt das der MS jetzt zuständig ist. Der MS kennt die Rahmenbedingungen, der kennt die Verordnung, der kennt die Entscheidung der Kommission, die Entscheidung schlägt der MS vor und das schreiben wir mit in die Verordnung rein und dann machen die das. Wie viel sie für welchen Teil ausgeben wollen, wenn sie das ändern wollen, dann dürfen sie das auch.*

Co-student:

*You are saying that they do these monitoring visits, but it is not institutionalised?*

Johannes Wachter:

*We have a whole set up of monitoring instruments. Including monitoring committees. For the Fund, we do not have monitoring obligations in the regulation. But we in the Commission feel that we should not let the MS carry on without us having been in contact in one occasion. So, we try and go and visit most cases once during the implementation phase in a more informal monitoring meeting. It is not a committee, it is a working level meeting where we go and the MS presents to us how they have set up their implementation system. They can do it as they wish. We like to see how things are going, they tell us how much money they have already spent. So that we have a certain assurance that the money will be spent in the time lot.*

Co-student:

*How come you have not been to Greece?*

Johannes Wachter:

*Lack of time basically. The Greek authorities know how it runs. But we should be going. We have been to most cases. The Greek administration is not particularly strong. We have been to L'Aquila. One case, where we went during the disaster case.*

*Are the resources used properly? Unless the MS uses the money for ineligible expenditure, they are used properly. We have no specific policy objectives. The policy objective is to give the MS the money. It does not matter whether it goes into building bridges or into helping the population survive the winter. They need to do both anyway and whether they finance a from national resources or b from the Fund or the other way around makes not really a difference. So, it is not very useful to see whether the Fund goes into operations that are the most effective. It does make a difference when you look at the efficiency of an individual amount of money. But the Fund is part of the overall effort of the MS to overcome the disaster. They are not doing with the Fund anything that they would not be doing anyway. If they did not have the Fund they would need to use national resources to do exactly that so everything would be done the same. One thing that distinguishes the new regulation is the possibility to pay in advance. It is 10 %, limited to a maximum of 30 million.*

*Are policy instruments activated on time? Around disasters, we have different instruments. The Fund is only one instrument that comes towards the end of the disaster cycle. The policies pursued by DG Echo who deal with prevention, preparedness, immediate response. They are different from what we do. The other instruments come relatively quickly.*

*The Fund comes late and that is often criticised for coming too late. On the other hand, it was never designed as an emergency instrument. Since the expenditure is retroactively eligible, that should not be a major issue. That is more a political thing, how quick the Commission reacts. So, on time, yes and no.*

*Are there unanticipated implementation difficulties? It has happened. In this case, I do not know. You would have to ask the Greek authorities. Some MS run into difficulties because they do not get things done as quickly as they should. Despite the fact that know they have 18 month, they sometimes do not manage to finish everything, to spend the money. And that is a problem of the national administration or the regional administration. We have had a number of cases where the MS has had to pay part of the assistance back because they were not able to spend it all. When they noticed, it was too late. Usually they always we spend it all. Sometimes they overestimate the need. Most of the times it is because of administrative issues. Sometimes other issues arise. That was with the L'Aquila case, that the Italians had not respected the public procurement. Public procurement is a tricky issue. If you have a longer-term reconstruction project, you need to observe public procurement rules. They did part of the expenditure eligible. They did not have to pay anything back because they did what we told them to do. We told them, declare more expenditure than you had. Since there is more to be done anyway, they declared to us a bigger amount. The technical term is overspending. If some of the projects are than declared eligible, they still have a sufficient amount of eligible operations declared to us so that the money can be considered as properly used.*

Co-student:

*They say that in the Italy case some of the money went to the Mafia. Is that actually the case?*

Johannes Wachter:

*I know there have been allegations. We have not been able to ascertain that. It has never been proven if the money went to the Mafia. The Mafia could be involved by theoretically, by controlling the relatively limited number of buildings societies that are able to set up housing for 20.000 people in a few months by overcharging prices. The Italian authorities are responsible for controlling that. I can not 100 % exclude that such things happened. We cannot act on pure speculation or the Media. In Italy things are extremely politicised. Such allegations are easily brought up. Under the Fund we can act when something is caught proof. It has never come to that. The Court of Auditors had the feeling that the buildings*

*were overpriced. But they made a comparison with market process. Which I find ridiculous. This had to be done in an extremely short time, in my opinion it was a miracle how quickly these buildings were set up. They have some quality problems but these things happen. You have to consider the specific circumstances. We felt that the Italian authorities managed that exceptional well.*

*Have all stakeholders been consulted? In that case I do not think that this question is relevant. The stakeholders were consulted in setting up the instrument and in revising the Fund. The implementation of an individual financial contribution to a MS is then a process for the national authorities. I am pretty certain that the Italian authorities took their decisions on how to rebuild L'Aquila as administrative decisions. It is not a long-term operation, you do these things under extreme time pressure. And I think their civil society was not much involved. They didn't set up consultation committees.*

*Did feedback improve delivery and resources? What we receive as feedback are the implementation reports and the results when we discover issues we try first to improve the information that we give for how to best use the money. Some of this found its way in the revisional regulation. The revision of the regulation is nothing that you do every two years. Even if we see now this or that should be changed, we would probably hesitate because opening up a regulation, that is decided by Council and Parliament We are trying to learn from our experience, we are adapting our working methods, adapting the interpretation, adapting the guidance that we provide, but not on the legislative side.*

*Were the policy goals achieved? We sent the money, they spent the money. Yes, for L'Aquila. With some criticism, of the Court of Auditors, we were not in agreement with them. If we manage to pay out the money in a reasonable amount of time, and they are able to spend it for eligible purposes, the policy goals are achieved. There aren't any further going policy goals.*

*Did some parts of the policy work better than others? There aren't so many parts. The implementation isn't always brilliant. The worst is when they cannot spend the whole amount. Some struggle and some have problems doing the audit well.*

*Implementation on time and within the budget? They cannot spend more than they get. Sometimes they spend less than they get. That happens, it did not happen in L'Aquila and we don't know yet about the Greek case. L'Aquila was implemented on time. It's a simple*

*instrument with very limited policy objectives. We could still improve a lot of things. It would be good if we were quicker. We could, for example, bring the Fund inside the EU budget and put an amount of money on the Fund. Budget lines every year, and then the Commission, when it receives an application, could decide, assess it, decide and spend the money. The disadvantage is, it does become some sort of a spending target, because in the systematic, thinking of the EU budget, money that is there is not meant not to be spend.*

Inken Brendel:

*What exactly has been improved since the reform?*

Johannes Wachter:

*The reform took place in 2014. In June. Before 2014 we couldn't pay any advances yet. Now, regional disasters, even though they took place at different places can be taken together. Since the revision, we have had one, soon a second rejection and that's it. Previously, 2 third got rejected.*

Inken Brendel:

*Less cases get rejected?*

Johannes Wachter:

*Hardly any. I was hoping that we would have no more rejections at all. But some governments still apply, even when they know that they won't be successful. That is part of the political game, that has more to do with national politics. The criteria is clear, they can't be clearer. Since we tell MS before if they submit their application whether that will be successful or not there shouldn't be any.*

Inken Brendel:

*To hand out the money, these operations are faster since the reform?*

Johannes Wachter:

*A lot of delays are due to specific circumstances. For example, if the timing is unfortunate. On average, we have become quicker by 2, 3 months.*

Inken Brendel:

*It is not a Structural Fund. But am I correct that it is implemented under regional policies?*

Johannes Wachter:

*No, it's not. It is an instrument in its own right. It is not the same budget and there are not the same rules. There are similarities.*

Inken Brendel:

*It does not belong to any policy area?*

Johannes Wachter:

*It belongs to the Cohesion policy area. But it is not a Cohesion policy. When you look at the legal basis of it, you will find that it is under Article 175 TFEU. That is the Cohesion Article. The second is Article 212 TFEU which is the basis for the cooperation with the countries.*

11.4 Informed Consent Form Johannes Wachter

### Informed Consent Form

#### Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title: The effectiveness of the EU Solidarity Fund
- 2) Project Description: The research question of this report is: "How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?" The aim of answering this question is to find out if the Fund is effective enough to financially help the affected Member State to cope with natural disasters. It is believed that this specific research will help to find out if there is still room for improvement and what needs to be changed in order to enhance the Fund for Member States in need.

**If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.**

**I am 16 years of age or older.**

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: Johannes Wachter Date: 28/8/2014

## 11.5 Hand in Form

<b>Hand in form Final Project/Dissertation</b>	
Month of presentation:	(X) October ( ) January ( ) March ( ) June ( ) August
Name:	Inken Brendel
Student number:	12097381
Proposal Registration Number:	ES .. 1516sem.. p.. - .... ES .. 1617sem.. p.. - ...
Educational course:	ES3 ( ) ES4 ( X)
Specialisation	Public (X) Private ( )  Name supervisor: Peter Pijlman  Name second marker: Enitsa Gabrovska.....
In case this is a re-sit submission:	Re-sit submission (X)  Name lecturer who marked your English: Marjolein Kooper .....
Final Project or Dissertation:	Dissertation (X) Final Project ( )

<p>If Final Project, please give:                  Contact data of assignment provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation:</li> <li>• Name of assignment provider /mentor (+ academic title):</li> <li>• Address of the organisation:</li> <li>• Email address assignment provider/mentor:</li> </ul>	

11.6 Student Ethics Form

**European Studies**  
**Student Ethics Form**

**Your name:** Inken Brendel

**Supervisor:** Peter Pijlman

Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a.  Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b.  Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c.  Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d.  Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

**Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)**

**Title of Project:** The effectiveness of the European Union Solidarity Fund

**Aims of project:** The goal of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the Fund. The central research question is: *How effective is the European Union Solidarity Fund in providing financial aid for reconstruction operations in case of a natural disaster inside of the European Union?*

**Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer ‘NO’ to this question.)**

**YES**

**If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.**

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects . I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_ - date  
\_\_\_\_\_

