«It is our duty as Europeans to stand by Italy and its citizens, who are showing extraordinary courage in times of difficulty, in order to help the effort to overcome as soon as possible the consequences of the earthquakes and to reconstruct fully the areas damaged. Reconstructing the beautiful Basilica of San Benedetto in Norcia with the help of EU funds will be a lasting symbol of EU solidarity and of the ability of the Italian people to bounce back.»

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, 30 November 2016

Italy has been hit hard by four successive earthquakes on 24 August, 26 October and 30 October 2016, and 18 January 2017. The EU has delivered on its promise to stand by the citizens in the affected regions of Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo and Lazio.

On 21 June 2017, the Commission proposed €1.2 billion from the EU Solidarity Fund. This is the highest amount ever mobilised under this fund. The money can be used to cover reconstruction, emergency and clean-up operations, and the protection of landmarks. Italy is already the largest beneficiary of the Solidarity Fund, having received €1.3 billion since the creation of the fund 15 years ago.
Immediately after the earthquakes, the Commission provided short-term assistance via the Copernicus Emergency Management Services, to monitor the situation and provide damage assessment satellite maps.

On 30 November 2016, the Commission proposed to fully fund reconstruction operations after natural disasters with the European Regional Development Fund. An agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on 24 May 2017 now foresees an exceptional co-financing rate of 95%. The compromise allows the much-needed funding to swiftly reach areas affected by natural disasters in all Member States.

In December 2016, following the request by the Italian authorities, the Commission released €30 million from the EU Solidarity Fund, the highest amount that can be paid as an advance.

On 23 January 2017, the Commission announced an exceptional frontloading under EU rural development programmes, to support farming communities of Central Italy. It increased the level of advance payments for certain measures under rural development from 85 % to 100%.

The Commission has granted flexibility to Italy for unusual events in relation to the preventive investment plan to protect Italy against seismic risks. The Commission has also considered for 2017 as well as in previous years that emergency and reconstruction costs related to recent earthquakes could be treated as one-off measures and excluded from the assessment of compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact.

The European Investment Bank is also lending its support and is working, together with Italy’s Cassa Depositi e Prestiti and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, on the preparation of framework loans worth €2 billion for reconstruction operations in the affected regions.