
EU-Albania: post-earthquake reconstruction, donors' conference on 17 February

(Brussels) “The EU is happy to announce that the donors' conference for Albania will be on 17 February. It's a donors' conference following the horrible earthquake in Albania. We want to help Albania in its reconstruction”, said Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, during the press conference at the end of the College of Commissioners meeting in Zagreb to mark the start of the Croatian Presidency of the EU. The EU “places high priority on the reconstruction and recovery of Albania and will help to coordinate an international response and to gather necessary financial support to assist in the long term efforts that will be needed for this. The aim is also to help strengthen the capacity of Albania to prepare and handle disaster response”. On 26 November 2019, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Albania, causing destruction of public and private infrastructure, hitting thousands of households and resulting in 51 fatalities, about 1,000 injured, and about 14,000 people temporarily displaced. Thousands of buildings have been seriously damaged, including schools and health care facilities. “The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism was activated at the request of the Albanian government after the earthquake and as a result, search and rescue teams were immediately deployed to Albania”. The Commission announced an initial €15 million grant for reconstruction of priority public buildings.

Marco Calvarese