



Press release
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Post 2020 EU budget: Commission proposal promises sustainability but continues funding contradictory policies

Budapest, Brussels, Prague – *Today the European Commission published its proposal for the next EU budget after 2020, the Multiannual Financial Framework. Civil society organisations within the People's Budget campaign [1] call on Member States to translate the Commission's pitch into the bold proposal that Europe needs for a brighter future.*

The Commission's proposed framework for the post-2020 EU budget acknowledges the need for Member States to spend in line with the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

But the People's Budget campaign cautions that references to sustainability are not enough to ensure genuine reform of the EU budget. Equal considerations for social, environmental and economic aspects are essential for a future EU budget based on a set of sustainability principles [2] advocated by the People's Budget campaign.

European decision makers now must bring more substance and ambition into the EU budgets' legal texts, and ensure that spending plans strengthen European values, like democracy, the rule of law and protection of civil space.

Klara Hajdu, SDG Watch Europe: “The future EU budget should finally stop funding unsustainable development. Giving some money for saving nature, eradicating poverty or fighting climate change will not solve any problems, if we continue to fund fossil fuel investments, intensive agriculture or favour the rich beneficiaries in the funding rules undermining social equality.”

Raphael Hanoteaux, EU Policy Officer, CEE Bankwatch Network: “The Commission's proposal is a loud and clear signal to Member States that spending priorities need to change. Signalling less money for countries of Central and Eastern Europe, governments in the region need to ensure that spending is targeted and the focus is on quality. Now more than ever, transparency over the budget must be stepped up to ensure that taxpayer money

best serves people, the environment and the economy. One of the easiest ways to do this is by eliminating wasteful and harmful subsidies for fossil fuels.”

Dr. Raphael Weyland, NABU Brussels: “Shockingly the direct payments under the Common Agricultural Policy, widely recognised as the most dysfunctional part of the EU budget, are being protected against broader cuts. There is no real reform towards a more sustainable agriculture and land-use policy. The Budget commissioner ignores the collapse of biodiversity by failing to properly allocate within the CAP money ring-fenced for nature and by shifting money to the more sustainable second pillar. The tiny increase of LIFE will not bring back bees and insects back to life.”

Sergio Aires, President of EAPN Europe: “While we welcome the increased budget, the explicit focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and crucially, the European Pillar of Social Rights, we are worried about the potential impact of the proposed 7% cut in EU Cohesion Funds, traditionally a strong tool in the fight against poverty. We will be closely monitoring further announcements this month to understand the impact of this 7% cut. We count on Member States and the Parliament to ensure that the new ‘ESF+’ ringfences a minimum of 30% to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, thus showing a clear political and financial commitment to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.”

Johannes Trimmel, CONCORD President: “With adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, Europe has taken serious commitment towards global solidarity and a more sustainable world. By suggesting to increase the external action allocation in the new EU budget proposal in comparison to the previous framework, the EC reinforces this general commitment. Yet, the EU as a whole – including bilateral budgets from Member States – needs to take further significant steps to live up to giving itself the means to confirm its engagement.”

NOTES

[1] The People’s Budget campaign (www.peoplesbudget.eu) brings together more than 70 European and national civil society organisations from different sectors, calling for a sustainability reform of the EU budget. The campaign is supported by SDG Watch Europe (<https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/>)

[2] Principles for sustainability reform are outlined here http://www.peoplesbudget.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/Position_MFF_1December_2017.pdf

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