

EU budget post-2020: Commission praised for alternative sources of income

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News

Most MEPs have welcomed a Commission plan to raise national contributions to 1.11 per cent of gross national income and introduce new sources of revenue for the next long-term EU budget.



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The plans are contained in the so-called multiannual financial framework (MFF) outlined on Wednesday.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker proposed a seven-year EU budget of €1.279 trillion in commitments, which translates into 1.11 per cent of the EU27's gross domestic product.

European Parliament President Antonio Tajani, in a statement, said, "In the presentation made by the

Commission, the importance of a political budget was stressed. The principle of European added value is underlined. It is important that the significance of own resources, which is a key point of Parliament resolutions, has been emphasised.

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“More funds for Erasmus+, research, SMEs and climate change are positive. We would have liked to have seen a budget of 1.3 per cent of GNI. Given the budget reduction for agriculture and cohesion, we will do everything to defend our positions. It is important that the Commission has stressed the role of resources, in line with Parliament’s positions.”

A large majority of deputies also praised plans to introduce new own resources for the EU, based on a new corporate tax scheme, revenues from the emissions trading system and a plastic tax to reduce GNI-based direct contributions from member states.

Speaking in Parliament on Thursday, Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel told MEPs, “The next EU budget marks a crucial moment. This is a useful proposal from the Commission but we believe we have to do everything to spend better.”

Luca Jahier, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, said, “The new MFF is a good starting point, but it’s not enough. I welcome the Commission’s significant effort to come up with an EU budget fit for the future. The proposal contains many good elements for a Europe that protects, empowers and defends, yet, on one crucial point, I would have preferred a more daring and ambitious plan.

“I remain convinced that the current ceiling for the EU’s expenditure has to be increased to 1.3 per cent of GNI to face the growing EU agenda.

“Indeed, the MFF is not a book-keeping exercise, it is a political act. It is about providing, or not providing, the EU with the means to deliver its agenda: a sustainable future for 500 million citizens.

“The Commission’s proposal is a good starting point but there needs to be an additional effort and courage in setting up the total amount.

Elsewhere, Janis Emmanouilidis, director of studies at the EPC in Brussels said, “The choices and priorities presented in the Commission’s proposals are reasonable and make sense. However, there is a long way ahead to reach a deal. Given Brexit and the high levels of distrust and divergence among the EU27, the process will be even more difficult than in the last MFF rounds.”

He warned, “Don't expect an agreement before 2020.”

His colleague Annika Hedberg, senior policy analyst at the EPC, said, “We’ve been here numerous times before. We’ve had all the talk about the need for change. But when push comes to shove, the Commission draws on the old canvas. According to the Commission, the EU in 2018 should prioritise cows over people.”

A Parliament spokesman said, “It is our common responsibility to give an important political signal on the Union’s capacity to act, and Parliament expects from the Council and the member states the same willingness to engage in an active and constructive dialogue with the European Parliament, as of today.

“The European Parliament’s consent is needed to adopt the new MFF and while Parliament is ready to advance quickly, it is determined to make full use of its prerogatives when assessing the outcome of the upcoming negotiations.

“A large majority of political groups consider that the expenditure and revenue side of the next MFF form part of a single package and no agreement can be reached on the MFF without corresponding headway being made on own resources.

“While different positions exist within the Parliament on the budgetary priorities, all political groups stand united in reminding that Parliament is to give its final consent. They are therefore determined to ensure that Parliament’s role is central throughout the entire process, in the interest of the European citizens.”

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions Secretary General, Eleni Marianou, said, “We note that the European Commission has proposed an EU budget at the same level as the previous MFF, despite the financial impact of Brexit, but the proposals are not ambitious enough to address both traditional and new EU priorities at an appropriate level. Introducing new own resources will enable the EU to go beyond the ‘juste retour’ approach.

“However, we are worried by the Commission’s proposed budget cuts to key policies impacting on regions, including the cohesion policy and the European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF). We are concerned that the European social fund is presented as a standalone fund with its own budget line as opposed to being included under cohesion policy.”

About the author

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