

2016 draft EU budget: Mandate for the trilogue

On 7 July 2015, the European Parliament (EP) is due to consider a report by its Committee on Budgets, which gives a first analysis of the draft 2016 EU budget proposed by the European Commission, highlighting the priorities for the EP in the coming negotiations with the Council.

Commission proposal for the 2016 budget

On 27 May 2015, the European Commission presented its proposals for the [draft general budget](#) of the EU for 2016, which amounts to €153.5 billion in commitments (€143.5 billion in payments). In her [presentation](#), Kristalina Georgieva, Commission Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources, gave an overview of proposed priorities for next year, highlighting that: 1) almost 50% of the resources would be devoted to activities aimed directly at creating investments, jobs and growth, and enhancing the internal market; 2) significant increases of payment appropriations would go to EU action in the areas of research (+11.6%, to €10 billion for Horizon 2020), education (+30%, to €1.8 billion for [Erasmus+](#)), response to external crises and support to development (+28%, to €9.5 billion), migration (+36%, to €521 million for the [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund](#)), and internal security (+15%, to €317 million for the Internal Security Fund); 3) the overall level of payments would however increase only by 1.6%; and 4) the [payment backlog at year-end](#) that has been affecting the EU budget in recent years is expected to decrease drastically.

Parliament's perspective on next year's EU budget

In a March 2015 [resolution](#), the European Parliament (EP) already stressed its priorities for next year, which include: tapping the full potential of the EU budget to create jobs and to promote growth; contributing to internal and external solidarity and to a secure EU; and tackling the payment backlog. The EP's Committee on Budgets (BUDG) has now adopted a [report](#) on the draft budget (rapporteur: José Manuel Fernandes, EPP, Portugal), providing a first analysis of the proposal and identifying areas on which the EP is expected to focus its action during the coming negotiations with the Council. The report welcomes the fact that the Commission's proposal reinforces the priorities identified in the EP resolution. In addition, the text highlights the principles that should underpin the action of the EP in the negotiations with the Council, such as: 1) ensuring a sufficient level of payment appropriations to reduce the backlog of payments in cohesion to some €2 billion, and to allow the smooth functioning of the new programmes that are expected to reach full speed; 2) minimising the impact on the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020 of the planned redeployments from these programmes to the [European Fund for Strategic Investments](#); 3) reversing the commitment cuts proposed for the COSME programme for small and medium-sized enterprises; 4) ensuring funding for the Youth Employment Initiative; and 5) using part of the remaining flexibility tools of the budget to further reinforce priorities.

Key dates for the 2016 budgetary procedure

The EP, the Council and the Commission have agreed on a calendar to smooth the running of the procedure. Key steps set out in a joint statement include: a first trilogue meeting will take place on 14 July; the Council should adopt its position by the third week of September; the EP should vote on its reading during its plenary session of 26-29 October; the conciliation period should run from 29 October to 18 November 2015.

The EP and the Council are the **two arms of the EU's budgetary authority** in charge of examining and amending the Commission proposal, and of establishing the annual budget of the EU. A special legislative procedure applies with **single reading** and **specific deadlines** for each of the institutional actors involved in it ([Article 314](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Council is first to adopt its position on the draft budget followed by the EP, opposite to what happens under the ordinary legislative procedure. In case of disagreement, a conciliation procedure takes place, with the European Commission acting as broker.