

Parliament's guidelines for the 2020 EU budget: Section III – European Commission

The European Parliament launches the discussion on the forthcoming year's budget for the European Union with the agreement of its guidelines. The 2020 budget will be the last one under the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF, 2014-2020). The guidelines, as adopted by the Committee on Budgets, outline the Parliament's priorities: investing in innovation, sustainable development, citizens' protection and security. Moreover, the proposed guidelines highlight the necessity to mitigate the budgetary consequences of Brexit and the need to recycle the unspent commitments for research. The Parliament is expected to adopt its guidelines during the March I plenary session.

Background

The European Parliament kicks off the annual budgetary debate with its guidelines. Although it is the European Commission's right and duty to propose a draft budget for the year to come, the two arms of the EU budgetary authority (the Parliament and the Council) wish to play their part earlier in the process. Therefore, the Parliament traditionally adopts its guidelines in March, some two months before the Commission publishes its draft budget. The Council, for its part, adopted its [priorities for the 2020 EU budget](#) on 12 February 2019.

European Parliament position

The Committee on Budgets (BUDG) adopted its [report](#) on 7 March 2019. The report elaborates policy and budgetary priorities for 2020 and discusses a number of outstanding issues. The Parliament has already voted its position on the [forthcoming MFF, for the years 2021-2027](#), and the report recalls some of the EP's commitments for the new MFF.

Parliament's priorities

The BUDG report calls for the 2020 Union budget to be a 'bridge to the future Europe', and summarises the proposed priorities as 'investing in innovation, sustainable development, citizens' protection and security'. It recalls that the Parliament intends to make full use of the existing flexibility and other provisions set out in the MFF Regulation and the Financial Regulation, in order to reinforce key EU programmes. The report demands the necessary payments be secured in 2020, in order to prevent a payment crisis in the first years of the new MFF, as was seen at the beginning of the current MFF (2014-2020). The report proposes increases to the following policy areas: Horizon 2020, digital capabilities, justice and border control, migration policy, defence, cybersecurity, peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland, Erasmus+, the Youth Employment Initiative and the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and to address demographic change. The proposed guidelines also stress that the 2020 EU budget must contribute to tackling environmental challenges and climate change.

The BUDG Committee guidelines urge the Commission to assess and prepare for all possible scenarios protecting the EU budget in the event the United Kingdom does not contribute to, or participate in, the implementation of the 2020 Union budget. Following the [negotiations on 2019 Union budget](#), the report proposes that the Council approves the re-use of the unspent commitments for research programmes. Therefore, it insists that the Council agrees to trigger [Article 15\(3\) of the Financial Regulation](#) in the context of the 2020 budgetary procedure. It expects the Commission to include the re-use of unspent research funds in the draft budget.

The European Parliament's delegation will discuss its adopted guidelines with the Council and the European Commission at the spring budgetary trilogue meeting, scheduled for 20 March 2019.

Budgetary procedure: [2019/2001\(BUD\)](#); Committee responsible: BUDG; Rapporteur: Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, Germany).

