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Answer given by Mr Oettinger  
on behalf of the European Commission  
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The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) provides a stable basis for implementing the EU budget, allowing the Union to carry out common policies over a period that is long enough to make them effective, and providing a framework for programming ensuring that EU spending is predictable and stays within agreed limits. This long term vision is important for potential beneficiaries of EU funds, co-financing authorities as well as national treasuries.

The current MFF comes to an end in 2020. In May and June 2018, the Commission tabled a comprehensive package of proposals for the 2021-2027 MFF, comprising also sector-specific legislation for 37 EU spending programmes and policies.

The decision on the future long-term EU budget is now for Member States and the European Parliament.

The late conclusion of negotiations of the current 2014-2020 MFF (adopted at the end of 2013, when the Commission had made its proposals in June 2011) led to significant delays in start of implementation of programmes in 2014-2015, which had negative consequences for many beneficiaries in the Member States.

The Commission therefore considers that swift negotiations and a timely agreement by the European Parliament and Council on the 2021-2027 MFF are highly desirable in order to give the best possible chance for all new programmes to start effectively on 1 January 2021. This is the best way to ensure predictability and continuity to partners in implementation and beneficiaries of EU programmes such as small and medium-sized enterprises, regions, students, researchers or farmers.