



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

BRUSSELS, 16/06/2010

GENERAL BUDGET - 2010
SECTION III - COMMISSION TITLES 19, 40

TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS N° **DEC 24/2010**

EUR

FROM

CHAPTER - 4002 Reserves for financial interventions

ITEM - 40 02 41 01 Differentiated appropriations (non-compulsory expenditure)

Commitments

- 20 000 000

TO

CHAPTER - 1908 European Neighbourhood Policy and relations with Russia

ITEM - 19 08 02 03 EU Baltic Sea Strategy

Commitments

20 000 000

I. INCREASE

a) Heading

19 08 02 03 - EU Baltic Sea Strategy

b) Figures at 04/06/2010

	Commitments
1A. Appropriation in budget (initial budget + AB)	p.m.
1B. Appropriation in budget (EFTA)	0
2. Transfers	0
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3. Final appropriation for the year (1A+1B+2)	0
4. Utilisation of final appropriation	0
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5. Amount not used/available (3-4)	0
6. Requirements up to year-end	20 000 000
7. Increase proposed	20 000 000
8. Increase as percentage of appropriation in budget (7/1A)	N/A
9. Increase, as a percentage of the final appropriation for the year, in the sum of transfers referred to in Article 23(1)(b) and (c) of the Financial Regulation, calculated in accordance with Article 17a of the implementing rules	n/a

c) Receipts arising from recovery (carried over) (C5)

	Commitments
1. Appropriation available at start of year	0
2. Appropriation available on the 04/06/2010	0
3. Rate of utilisation [(1-2)/1]	n/a

d) Detailed grounds for the increase

Based on an amendment by the European Parliament to the 2010 budget, the Budgetary Authority introduced a new budget line "Baltic Sea Strategy" (19 08 02 03) under Heading 4. EUR 20 million have been placed in reserve to support the external dimension of the Strategy (especially involving Russia). These funds are intended to finance activities in the Baltic Sea Region not covered currently by the programmes under the Cohesion Funds or the ENPI instrument. The appropriation of EUR 20 million in commitments and payments has been put in reserve pending a proposal by the Commission on how the funds can be used (see annex).

The allocated funds will be implemented under the ENPI regulation and through the Northern Dimension framework, in particular:

- a) Further financing of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) through a contribution to the Environmental Fund, enabling the implementation of environmental projects in Russia and Belarus.

A contribution at the level of EUR 12 million will therefore be proposed for financing actions as identified in the projects' proposal pipeline and further elaborated with the NDEP support experts.

An additional contribution (approximately EUR 2 million) for the benefit of Belarus could follow as the decision of the Assembly of the NDEP Contributors from November 2009 entitled Belarus to receive EUR 5 million in the form of grants.

- b) Other actions (approximately EUR 6 million) supporting the Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan activities with Russia could be envisaged. They could entail environment, climate change, energy efficiency, health and social protection, and possibly projects in Transport and Logistics, under the concept of sustainable development and innovation.

(See detailed technical annex attached)

II. DECREASE

a) Heading

40 02 41 01 - Differentiated appropriations (non-compulsory expenditure)

b) Figures at 04/06/2010

	Commitments
1A. Appropriation in budget (initial budget + AB)	209 320 000
1B. Appropriation in budget (EFTA)	0
2. Transfers	-64 820 000
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3. Final appropriation for the year (1A+1B+2)	144 500 000
4. Utilisation of final appropriation	0
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5. Amount not used/available (3-4)	144 500 000
6. Requirements up to year-end	124 500 000
7. Proposed decrease	20 000 000
8. Decrease as percentage of appropriation in budget (7/1A)	9.55%
9. Decrease, as a percentage of the final appropriation for the year, in the sum of transfers referred to in Article 23(1)(b) and (c) of the Financial Regulation, calculated in accordance with Article 17a of the implementing rules	n/a

c) Receipts arising from recovery (carried over) (C5)

	Commitments
1. Appropriation available at start of year	0
2. Appropriation available on the 04/06/2010	0
3. Rate of utilisation [(1-2)/1]	n/a

d) Detail grounds for the transfer

See justification under point I d).

Proposal for action in follow-up to the European Parliament Amendment concerning cooperation with Third Countries in the framework of the Baltic Sea Strategy

The purpose of this document is to outline a Commission proposal on how to use the 20 million euro in the 2010 Budget for the 'EU Baltic Sea Strategy' cooperation with third countries, in order to lift the current reserve on the appropriation.

1. Background

Based on an amendment by the European Parliament to the 2010 budget the Budgetary Authority introduced a new budget line "EU Baltic Sea Strategy" (19 08 02 03) under Heading 4. EUR 20 million have been placed in reserve for support of the external dimension of the Strategy. These funds are intended to finance activities in the Baltic Sea Region not covered currently by the programmes under cohesion funds or the ENPI instrument¹. The appropriation of EUR 20 million in commitments and payments has been put in reserve pending a proposal by the Commission on how the funds can be used.

The Baltic Sea Programme is an ERDF-funded transnational programme with a special ENPI Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) element. However, the Russian Federation has not signed the related Financing Agreement, and thus was not included in the programme, which creates a drawback in its functioning. The other option for channelling the funds is the contribution through the Northern Dimension, identified by the EU Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan as a platform that provides the basis for external aspects of the Strategy. Also other actions involving third countries and supporting the objectives of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan can be envisaged.

However, there is a need to ensure that the funds can be mobilised within the commitment deadline of end 2010 and contracting deadline end 2011.

Given

- a) the delays experienced in agreeing with Russia on previous Financing Agreements and their entry into force²,
- b) the requests by the Russian authorities for reciprocity related to financial audit and control (presenting challenges for Member States) and equal co-financing, and
- c) indications that the Russian government would not support Russia's inclusion in the Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Baltic Sea Region programme,

it is recommended not to use the new funds for this ongoing regional CBC programme.

Having examined the above options, the Commission concludes that, *it is preferable to channel the funds through other existing mechanisms, particularly the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) and the Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan which do not depend on a Financing Agreement with the Russian Government.*

2. The Northern Dimension as the framework for action

The EU Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan identified the **Northern Dimension** (ND) as a platform for external aspects of the Strategy. Against the background described above, the Commission thus suggest using the Northern Dimension as the framework for activities which can absorb the additional budget provided through the Budget Authority in a targeted and timely manner.

1 The idea is to "fund coordination and information, as well as pilot projects in any of the four pillars of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan, with emphasis on reducing nutrient inputs and maintaining a natural biodiversity, promoting research, innovation, and maritime safety and security".

2 For example the CBC Financing Agreements signed at the EU-Russia Summit in Stockholm in November 2009 are not yet ratified by the Russian Duma.

The main objectives of the policy are to provide a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthen stability and well-being, intensify economic cooperation, promote economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe. Geographically the ND focuses increasingly on northwest Russia, Kaliningrad, the Baltic and the Barents Seas, the Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas. Thematically, the environment and nuclear waste management are two of the focal points.

The **Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP)** is a result-focused initiative responding to calls from the international community - including Russia and Belarus - for concerted action to tackle some of the most pressing environmental problems in the Northern Dimension Area covering the Baltic and Barents Seas region.

The NDEP promotes coordination between the European Commission, partner governments (Russia, France, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Finland, UK, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, Belarus) and international financial institutions (EBRD, Nordic Investment Bank, EIB, Nordic Environment Finance Corporation and World Bank) to facilitate optimal financing structures combining loans, grants and local budget funding for implementation of its priority projects. The grants offer an extra incentive for environmental projects that may not be otherwise financially viable and unable to achieve satisfactory environmental targets without that intervention.

The present EU funding for the environmental window totals EUR 30 million in addition to a contribution of EUR 40 million by the Russian Federation as well as EUR 57.6 million from other Partner Countries (Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Belarus). The projects being proposed consist of environmental projects in water and wastewater treatment, management of municipal and agricultural waste, energy efficiency. The NDEP thus delivers real benefits to the environment – and the people – of the Baltic Sea Region.

3. Proposal for action

For 2010, the Commission suggests to allocate the funds currently in reserve through the Northern Dimension framework, in particular:

- a) **Further financing of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP)** through a contribution to its Environmental Support Fund managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, enabling the implementation of environmental projects in Russia and Belarus. This form of cooperation would be entirely in line with the Amendment's objectives to strengthen the Baltic Sea Strategy. The fund manager, EBRD, confirms that a number of high quality projects to contract a significant part of the proposed EUR 20 million has already been identified or can be created. These projects include waste water and solid waste treatment, ultimately reducing nutrient inputs in the Baltic Sea. The Commission has a longstanding cooperation with the EBRD in the form of Contribution Agreements.

A contribution at the level of EUR 12 million will therefore be proposed for financing several proposed projects and further elaborated with the NDEP support experts. An additional contribution (approximately EUR 2 million) for the benefit of **Belarus** would follow as the decision by the Assembly of the NDEP Contributors from November 2009 entitled Belarus to receive EUR 5 million in the form of grants.

- b) Also **other actions** (approximately 6 million euro) supporting the Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan activities with Russia and Belarus could be envisaged. They could entail environment, climate change, energy efficiency, health and social protection, and possibly projects in Transport and Logistics, under the concept of sustainable development and innovation. This support can take the form of Service contracts or grants (Technical Assistance, exchange of good practices, studies, seminars, study visits etc.) At this moment the process of identifying the projects is in a drafting phase.

4. Legal Base and budget line

The ENPI offers a solid political and regulatory framework with established dialogue between the EU and Partner Countries. It provides a coherent multiannual programming platform and ensures that the activities will be treated in harmony within the ENPI and with other programming instruments.

The legal basis for the use of funds would therefore be the ENPI Regulation. The Country Strategies 2007 – 2013 and the multiannual Indicative Programmes for Russia (2007 – 2010) and Belarus (2007 – 2011) already identify sectoral priorities that are in line with the Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan. Moreover, the ENPI Regional East Country Strategy 2007 – 2013 and its Indicative Programme (2010 – 2013) identify the Northern Dimension under *Sub-Priority: Support the implementation of the Black Sea Synergy and the Northern Dimension (Priority Area 4: Advancing integration with the EU and promoting regional cooperation)*.

In order to implement these actions under the ENPI regulation, the Commission will transfer the appropriations from budget line 19 08 02 03 EU Baltic Sea Strategy to budget line 19 08 01 03 European Neighbourhood Policy and relations with Russia by means of internal transfer immediately after the release of the reserve. This budget line provides an unambiguous legal base linked to well-established decision making procedures.

The above projects will require time-intensive preparations with the concerned authorities of the third countries and possibly some Member States. First disbursements will only take place in 2011. No Payment Appropriations are therefore required in 2010.

5. Conclusion

Based upon the existing legal framework, this proposal fulfils the objectives of the Amendment, presenting a politically and environmentally sound solution for the sustainable cooperation with Third States in the region. It substantiates the further development of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and its integration into the overall policy for the Baltic Sea region. As extensive negotiations with third parties will have to precede the Financing Decision, the Budget Authority is requested to lift the reserve so that the corresponding commitment appropriations will be available on the operational budget line in due time.