



EUROPESE COMMISSIE

BRUSSEL, 16/06/2010

ALGEMENE BEGROTING - 2010
DEEL III – COMMISSIE – TITELS 19, 40

KREDIETOVERSCHRIJVING NR. **DEC 24/2010**

EUR

VAN

HOOFDSTUK 40 02 - Reserves voor financiële interventies

POST 40 02 41 01 - Gesplitste kredieten (niet-verplichte uitgaven)

VK - 20 000 000

NAAR

HOOFDSTUK 19 08 - Europees nabuurschapsbeleid en betrekkingen met Rusland

POST 19 08 02 03 - Strategie van de Europese Unie ten aanzien van de Oostzeeregio

VK 20 000 000

I. TE VERHOGEN KREDIETEN

a) Begrotingsplaats

19 08 02 03 - Strategie van de Europese Unie ten aanzien van de Oostzeeregio

b) Kwantitatieve gegevens op 4.6.2010

	VK
1A. Begrotingskredieten (aanvankelijke begroting + GB)	p.m.
1B. Begrotingskredieten (EVA)	0
2. Overschrijvingen	0
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3. Definitieve kredieten van het begrotingsjaar (1A+1B+2)	0
4. Besteding van de definitieve kredieten	0
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5. Niet-gebruikte/beschikbare kredieten (3-4)	0
6. Behoeften tot het einde van het begrotingsjaar	20 000 000
7. Voorgestelde verhoging	20 000 000
8. Verhoging in procent van de begrotingskredieten (7/1A)	n.v.t.
9. Verhoging, in procent van de definitieve kredieten voor het begrotingsjaar, van de overeenkomstig artikel 23, lid 1, onder b) en c), van het Financieel Reglement gecumuleerde overschrijvingen, berekend volgens artikel 17 bis van de uitvoeringsvoorschriften	n.v.t.

c) Overgedragen ontvangsten die afkomstig zijn van terugvorderingen (C5)

	VK
1. Bij de aanvang van het begrotingsjaar beschikbare kredieten	0
2. Op 4.6.2010 beschikbare kredieten	0
3. Bestedingsniveau	n.v.t.

d) Motivering

Op grond van een amendement van het Europees Parlement in de begroting 2010 heeft de begrotingsautoriteit aan rubriek 4 een nieuwe begrotingspost "Strategie ten aanzien van de Oostzeeregio" toegevoegd. Er is 20 miljoen EUR in de reserve geplaatst voor ondersteuning van de externe dimensie van de strategie (met name het betrekken van Rusland bij de strategie). De middelen zijn bestemd voor de financiering van activiteiten in de Oostzeeregio die momenteel niet onder de programma's van het Cohesiefonds of het ENPI-instrument vallen. Het krediet van 20 miljoen EUR aan vastleggingen en betalingen is in de reserve geplaatst in afwachting van een voorstel van de Commissie in verband met het gebruik van de middelen (zie bijlage).

De toegewezen middelen zullen worden uitgevoerd op basis van de ENPI-verordening en in het kader van de Noordelijke Dimensie, in het bijzonder via:

- a) voortzetting van de financiering van het milieupartnerschap voor de Noordelijke Dimensie (NDEP) via een bijdrage aan het milieufonds om de uitvoering van milieuprojecten in Rusland en Wit-Rusland mogelijk te maken.

Een bijdrage van 12 miljoen EUR zal daarom worden voorgesteld voor de financiering van projectacties die "in the pipeline" zitten en met de NDEP-deskundigen nader zullen worden uitgewerkt.

Hierop zou een aanvullende bijdrage (van ongeveer 2 miljoen EUR) ten gunste van Wit-Rusland kunnen volgen aangezien de vergadering van financiers van het NDEP in november 2009 heeft besloten dat Wit-Rusland 5 miljoen EUR in de vorm van subsidies kan krijgen;

- b) ter overweging, overige acties (ongeveer 6 miljoen EUR) ter ondersteuning van activiteiten met Rusland in het kader van het actieplan van de strategie voor de Oostzeeregio op de volgende gebieden: milieu, klimaatverandering, energie-efficiëntie, gezondheid en sociale bescherming, en eventueel vervoer en logistiek, in een perspectief van duurzame ontwikkeling en innovatie.

(Zie bijgevoegde technische bijlage voor details)

II. TE VERLAGEN KREDIETEN

a) Begrotingsplaats

40 02 41 01 - Gesplitste kredieten (niet-verplichte uitgaven)

b) Kwantitatieve gegevens op 4.6.2010

	VK
1A. Begrotingskredieten (aanvankelijke begroting + GB)	209 320 000
1B. Begrotingskredieten (EVA)	0
2. Overschrijvingen	-64 820 000
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3. Definitieve kredieten van het begrotingsjaar (1A+1B+2)	144 500 000
4. Besteding van de definitieve kredieten	0
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5. Niet-gebruikte/beschikbare kredieten (3-4)	144 500 000
6. Behoeften tot het einde van het begrotingsjaar	124 500 000
7. Voorgestelde verlaging	20 000 000
8. Verlaging in procent van de begrotingskredieten (7/1A)	9,55%
9. Verlaging, in procent van de definitieve kredieten voor het begrotingsjaar, van de overeenkomstig artikel 23, lid 1, onder b) en c), van het Financieel Reglement gecumuleerde overschrijvingen, berekend volgens artikel 17 bis van de uitvoeringsvoorschriften	n.v.t.

c) Overgedragen ontvangsten die afkomstig zijn van terugvorderingen (C5)

	VK
1. Bij de aanvang van het begrotingsjaar beschikbare kredieten	0
2. Op 4.6.2010 beschikbare kredieten	0
3. Bestedingsniveau	n.v.t.

d) Motivering

Zie motivering in punt I, onder 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.