

Syria and Africa Funds: Parliament urges member states to pay up

Parliament urged member states to fulfil their pledges and pay for the EU migration actions that have been agreed by EU leaders. In Wednesday's debate, MEPs proposed to use an unexpected windfall of €2.3 billion from EU fines and customs duties to finance some of the measures. The Commission earlier said the new trust funds set up for Syria and Africa were short of €2.22 billion in national contributions.

In the plenary debate with Commission vice-president Kristalina Georgieva and Nicolas Schmit, Luxembourg's labour minister, representing the Council presidency, most MEPs emphasized that EU members must feed the trust funds set up to deal with the root causes of migration.

José Manuel Fernandes (EPP, PT), chief rapporteur for the 2016 EU budget: "Member states will receive €2.3 billion as extraordinary reimbursements from fines and customs duties. This is exactly the same amount that member states have to make available to ensure funding of the two funds, without any additional financial effort. We have to tackle the refugee crisis at its roots (...) these two funds would enable us to build a better future in those countries and prevent wars."

Gérard Deprez (ALDE, BE), rapporteur for the 2016 EU budget: "We are underestimating the gravity of the situation. €1 billion for 2 million Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, plus 4 or 5 million displaced people in Syria will only change things at the margins. And who to give the money to? President Erdogan, who asks for it, or NGOs?"

Eider Gardiazábal Rubial (S&D, ES), rapporteur for the 2015 EU budget: "The European Union makes a laudable effort in financially supporting migration action, but what about the member states? They are still €2.2 billion down on matching EU action. The Commission revealed recently that €9.4 billion is going back to member states due to various adjustments. It would be a good gesture (...) to use part of this money to contribute to the trust funds."

How to make the best out of it

Reimer Böge (EPP, DE) asked the Commissioner to report back in every budget committee meeting exact figures on which country paid how much and when. Bernd Kölmel (ECR, DE) insisted on using the money to help people close to the conflict zones while Liadh Ní Riada (GUE/NLE, IR) deplored the lack of general strategy for the trust funds and its projects and programmes. Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA, FI) said: "Although it's not enough, let's make the

best out of it". Ignazio Corrao (EFDD, IT) called for facts and actions, not only words and commitments, while Nicolas Bay (EFN, FR) recommended certain NGOs for funding.

Speaking in the debate, Commission vice-president Georgieva reiterated her hope that member states would pledge more money for the Africa fund at the ongoing Valletta summit meeting (11-12 November), while Nicolas Schmit, for the Council, remarked that the level of member state contributions "was not yet satisfying".

Background

Member states committed at successive Council meetings to provide additional national financial contributions to tackle the migration crisis, in addition to the €9.2 billion in EU funds which will already be spent in 2015 and 2016. However, Commission data revealed on 6 November shows that national contributions to match part of the contributions by the EU are still running short to the tune of €467.6 million for the EU Regional Trust Fund for Syria, €1.75 billion for the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, and €59.6 million for humanitarian aid.

Procedure: budgetary

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€ EU budget allocated to the EU Regional Trust Fund for Syria (€500 million) and the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (€1.8 billion)

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Further information

[Video recording of debate \(click on 11.11.2015\)](#)
[Speech by EP President Martin Schulz at the Valletta summit \(11.11.2015\)](#)
[Valletta Summit on migration, 11-12 November 2015](#)
[Commission press release: State of play on refugee crisis contributions \(06.11.2015\)](#)
["Match your promises on refugee crisis" - Budget rapporteurs' statements \(05.11.2015\)](#)
[Commission Q&A on financing measures in the migration crisis \(30.09.2015\)](#)

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EU survey on migration

<http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=876d9eea-ff59-4963-a4b7-a54800c1dd18>