



Budget 2012: figures now available

Committees: Committee on Budgets

The final figures for the budget 2012, as amended by the Budgets Committee, are now available. These are the results of two days of negotiations and voting and are to be used as Parliament's position in its negotiations with EU Member States.

In general, MEPs sought to restore the draft budget proposed by the Commission, after cuts by the Council in July. The budget position of the Committee implies an increase in payments of 5,23% as compared to this year's budget and an increase of commitments of 3,95%.

Investments now at cruising speed

The categories that see the biggest increases in payments are Research and Development (+10.35%) and Cohesion and Structural funds (+8,38%). The reason for this is that the implementation of these long term investment funds is now, in the fifth year of the current multiannual financial framework (MFF), at cruising speed.

Another category that sees a significant increase is Freedom, Security and Justice (+6.84%), due to growing needs to manage refugee and migration flows and step up maritime surveillance in the Mediterranean.

Key changes

Key changes proposed by the Budgets Committee include increased spending on Palestine, maritime surveillance in the Mediterranean, managing refugee flows, EU2020 growth strategy-related programmes such as Life Long Learning, funding for vegetable producers and development aid for Asia and South America. Proposed savings as compared to the Commission proposal include €36 million on Common Foreign and Security Policy and almost €15 million in Parliament's own budget.

Research, innovation and education (heading 1A)

The rapporteur for the lion's share of the EU spending, Ms Francesca Balzani (S&D, IT), warned on several occasions that the EU2020 growth strategy should not fall victim to the current austerity climate, since investments in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are needed to help Europe out of the crisis. The committee followed her proposals to add approximately €30 million more than the Commission foresaw to budget lines directly related to EU2020.

Committee members disagreed with a proposal by the Commission and Council to take the funding needed for ITER, the nuclear fusion project in the south of France, from the funds foreseen for the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development. As the idea for this mega-project was mooted during the current MFF period, MEPs feel it should be financed with fresh money.

Cohesion policy (heading 1B)

MEPs restored the Commission's draft budget proposal, which Member States had sought to cut.

Press release

Agriculture and environment (heading 2)

The Budgets Committee, at the request of the Agriculture Committee, agreed to add €250 million to funds for fruit and vegetable producers. This money is meant to prevent future crises such as last year's EHEC-bacteria one and to compensate farmers for the financial consequences of further crises.

The committee strongly defended the EU's food for the needy scheme, which provides food to food banks, for which a new legal basis is blocked in the Council.

Freedom, security, justice and citizenship (3a and 3b)

MEPs disagreed with cuts proposed by the Council on the EU Refugee Fund, Return Fund and External Border Fund (€45 million). The budget for the EU border agency Frontex should be increased by a reserve of €25 million, they said, because this money might be needed for maritime border controls in the Mediterranean and for stepping up surveillance at the Greek-Turkish border. Just last week extra money was added to the 2011 budget for these purposes and MEPs feel the situation might not be better by the end of the year.

The committee also proposed €5 million extra for youth projects in the EU's southern and eastern neighbourhood.

Foreign affairs (heading 4)

MEPs agreed to approve an increase of €100 million in aid to Palestine and 27 million for the development co-operation instrument for Asia and Latin America. They also added €3 million for election observation missions and €3 million for the Turkish-Cypriote Community. To fund this, MEPs cut other lines such as the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan.

Administration (heading 5)

The rapporteur for the EP budget and those of the other institutions, Mr José Manuel Fernandes (EPP, PT), proposed further cuts to Parliament's initial position on its budget. Instead of an increase of 2.3%, as foreseen in April, the committee opted for an increase of around 1.44%, while doing more with the money. The proposal now includes the accommodation of 18 extra MEPs as a result of the Lisbon Treaty. To bring the expenses down, MEPs voted for a 5% cut in their travel expenses and those of EP staff. Furthermore they intend to save money on translation and interpretation by making organizational changes.

The final aggregate figures are available at the link below.

Next steps

The Budgets Committee will vote on a draft budget resolution next week, explaining why these figures were adopted. Parliament will then vote its position at the 26 October plenary session. A 21-day conciliation period starts in November. If Parliament and Council can agree, the final budget could be approved by the end of November.

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