



Members of EP Budgets Committee react to EU budget plans for 2013

Committees: Committee on Budgets

MEPs made known their views on Wednesday after Budgets Commissioner Janusz Lewandowski had presented the Draft EU Budget for 2013 at the Commission's mid-day press briefing. The Commission is seeking an increase in the payments budget of 6.8% (which would amount to €138 billion) and an increase of 2% in the commitments budget.

Alain Lamassoure (EPP, FR), chair of Parliament's Budgets Committee, criticised the fact that, due to late changes in the Commission's agenda, the traditional procedure of presenting the budget in the European Parliament was not observed. "This is a breach with tradition. Now the public and press have been informed prior to the members of the budgetary authority", he said.

Following misunderstandings over payment figures during last year's negotiations on the 2012 budget, Mr Lamassoure and Giovanni La Via (EPP, IT), the MEP in charge of negotiations on the part of the 2013 budget relating to Commission spending, had demanded a joint meeting with the three institutions involved to spell out the exact level of payments needed to pay the bills for the different policy areas. They hope this meeting - which will take place in May - will advance the negotiations on the 2013 budget by clarifying the amounts the Commission is obliged to pay.

Mr La Via hopes the proposed budget will allow EU projects to continue without difficulty. "We asked the Commissioner to propose a realistic budget for payments. Today's proposal seems sufficient even though it is below our estimates", he said. He expressed reservations over the proposal for the commitments budget: "A 2% increase really means a freeze of the EU budget. To emerge from the crisis I am convinced we need 'more Europe' and not 'less Europe'. Therefore I am not happy. We need a stronger commitment to find ways to create growth and jobs, which - after all - are the priorities agreed by all three European institutions."

The MEP in charge of next year's European Parliament administrative budget, Derek Vaughan (S&D, UK), thinks it is important that EU institutions play their part in finding budget savings. "That is why I am insisting on a freeze or even a cut in real terms for the European Parliament's budget. In these challenging economic times, institutions need to show budgetary self-restraint and work out where savings can be made", he said.

Procedure

Parliament and the Member States now have to reach agreement on the 2013 budget. The Council will be the first to set out its position, followed by Parliament in September/October. After that, negotiations will take place in a conciliation procedure over a 21-day period in November.

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