

# Migration and border management

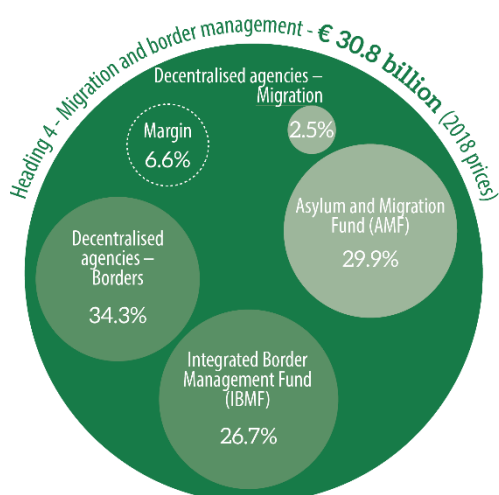
## Heading 4 of the 2021-2027 MFF

### SUMMARY

The Treaty of Lisbon makes explicit reference to pooling financial resources to support common policies on asylum, immigration and external borders. While expenditure for these policy areas still represents a minor share of the EU budget, it has recently increased in the wake of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. Since the resources available under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF) of the EU proved insufficient to address the crisis, EU institutions had to use the flexibility provisions of the MFF extensively.

Given the increasing salience of the policy areas, the European Commission has proposed the establishment of a specific heading devoted to migration and border management worth €30.8 billion (2018 prices) in the 2021-2027 MFF. As compared with the current period, these allocations would represent a significant increase in relative terms, especially as regards border management. The heading would finance two funding instruments, the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) and the Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF), as well as the activities of relevant EU decentralised agencies, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the European Asylum Support Office. By designing these new funds, the European Commission seeks to improve synergies with other EU funding instruments and increase capacity to react to evolving needs.

Negotiations for the MFF package are very complex, involving different legislative procedures for the adoption of the overall MFF and the sector-specific instruments. The European Parliament, the Council and the European Council are working on the proposals, which have also triggered reactions from other stakeholders, including academics, think-tanks and commentators.



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## Introduction

Since the 1990s, developments such as the removal of internal border controls within the [Schengen area](#) have strengthened the case for increased cooperation between EU Member States in the fields of asylum, migration and external borders. However, experts consider that progress has been slow, with difficulties in reaching agreements, and opt-outs in some cases. In the EU context, asylum, migration and borders are part of the broader area of freedom, security and justice (Title V of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU](#)), a domain to which the December 2009 entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon introduced various changes. Article 67(2) TFEU establishes the EU's competence in establishing a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States and fairness to non-EU nationals. Article 80 TFEU makes explicit reference to pooling financial resources to support these policies, stating that their development and implementation are 'governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between Member States'.<sup>1</sup>

In the EU budget, the internal dimension of asylum, migration and external borders accounts for a minor share of total resources, despite recent increases agreed by the EU institutions and Member States in the wake of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis (see below). In 2016, for the first time, the payment outturns for these policy areas jointly represented more than 1 % of the EU budget.<sup>2</sup> From a broader perspective, Table 1 shows how asylum, migration and external borders, as a significant component of activities in the field of justice and home affairs (JHA),<sup>3</sup> have been included in the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) since 1993. Both in the 2007-2013 and the 2014-2020 MFFs, the European Council cut the resources proposed by the European Commission for the relevant heading more than twice as much as the overall MFF in relative terms.

Table 1 – Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) measures in the Multiannual Financial Frameworks (MFFs) since the Treaty of Maastricht

Programming period	1993-1999	2000-2006	2007-2013	2014-2020
Treaty in force at the start of the period	Maastricht	Amsterdam	Nice	Lisbon
Heading containing JHA measures and its share of the agreed MFF	3) Internal policies (6 % of the total)	3) Internal policies (6.8 % of the total)	3) Citizen, freedom, security, justice (1.2 % of the total)	3) Security and citizenship (1.6 % of the total)
Features of the heading in relation to JHA	JHA is a residual element (joint actions decided by the Council) of a broad heading.	JHA is a limited component of a much broader heading.	JHA is a significant part of a policy-specific heading. Two subheadings (border control and asylum under 3a).	JHA is a significant part of a policy-specific heading. Elimination of subheadings.
Cut to the initial Commission proposal for the heading	N/A	N/A	27 %	16.6 %
Cut to the overall MFF proposal	N/A	N/A	13 %	8.2 %
Main intermediary adaptations relevant to the JHA heading	-	Schengen Facility for new Member States introduced with enlargement.	-	Mid-term revision reinforces flexibility provisions and some JHA allocations.

Source: A. D'Alfonso, [External border control and asylum management as EU common goods: A budgetary perspective](#), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 2019.

## Asylum, migration and borders in the 2014-2020 MFF

In the current MFF covering the years 2014 to 2020, the internal dimension of the policies for asylum, migration and external borders is a major component of its smallest heading ('Security and citizenship' or Heading 3).<sup>4</sup> In these policy areas, the EU budget traditionally supports different types of measures that can be grouped into three broad categories of expenditure:<sup>5</sup>

- *EU funding programmes* (co-)financing measures in Member States and financing a number of common activities such as emergency assistance – the [borders and visa instrument](#) of the Internal Security Fund (ISF),<sup>6</sup> initially amounting to €2.7 billion (down from €3.5 billion in the Commission proposal), is the 2014-2020 tool for external border control. The [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\)](#), initially endowed with €3.1 billion over the same period (down from €3.8 billion in the Commission proposal), tackles activities relating to asylum and migration. Member States implement part of the resources under shared management with the Commission, following the adoption of national programmes. The remainder of the allocations is implemented under direct management (e.g. the European Commission for Union actions, which are specific measures of interest and benefit to the entire EU) or indirect management (e.g. EU decentralised agencies in the context of delegation agreements);<sup>7</sup>
- *decentralised EU agencies*, which receive financing for their activities and operations – the [European Border and Coast Guard Agency \(Frontex\)](#), the [European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\)](#), and the [European Agency for the Operational Management of large-scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice \(eu-LISA\)](#);
- *IT systems* designed, maintained and updated to facilitate cooperation in the relevant policy areas – major systems developed during previous programming periods include the [Schengen Information System \(SIS II\)](#), the [Visa Information System \(VIS\)](#), and the [European Asylum Dactyloscopy Database \(EURODAC\)](#) to make the identification of asylum-seekers easier. A more recent example is the [Entry/Exit System](#) that eu-LISA is developing to improve the management of the EU external borders based on [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/2226](#).

The policy areas of asylum, migration and borders are an example of differentiated integration. Focusing on the funds, Denmark does not take part in the AMIF, while Ireland and the UK do not participate in the ISF borders and visa instrument on account of opt-outs. However, four non-EU countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) participate in and contribute to the latter (and to the financing of Frontex), since they are Schengen associated countries.

Heading 3 of the 2014-2020 MFF has been confronted with various challenges since the very start of the programming period. The late adoption of the MFF in December 2013 delayed the preparation and the implementation of national programmes. An important share of the resources planned under shared management for 2014, including for the AMIF (€172.7 million) and the ISF (€269.6 million), had to be postponed and reprogrammed for 2015 and subsequent years.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, growing instability in the EU's neighbourhood resulted in a sharp increase in arrivals of asylum-seekers, leading to what has been defined as the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. This development put significant pressure on the Schengen system and the [common European asylum system \(CEAS\)](#), which, under the [Dublin Regulation](#), assigns responsibility for examining an asylum request mainly to the first EU country of entry of an asylum-seeker. According to various analysts, the refugee crisis has exposed the asymmetry of both systems, which are deemed to assign disproportionate responsibility to Member States neighbouring non-EU countries, notably those on the EU's southern and eastern borders.<sup>9</sup>

The EU institutions and Member States developed numerous initiatives, including legislative proposals, to address various shortcomings.<sup>10</sup> However, from a budgetary standpoint, the allocations and the margin available under Heading 3 proved largely insufficient to tackle the needs

triggered by the refugee crisis and support the additional initiatives. For this reason, the EU resorted extensively to the flexibility provisions of the MFF, which had to be replenished on the occasion of the [mid-term revision](#) of the framework in 2017. It has been estimated that, over the 2015-2018 period, flexibility tools provided for almost half (46 %) of the resources that financed reinforced measures for asylum, migration and borders within the EU.<sup>11</sup>

Additional resources strengthened the initial 2014-2020 appropriations of various instruments, with particularly significant increases for the AMIF (and especially its emergency assistance measures), Frontex and EASO. In the case of Frontex, these decisions reflected and accompanied its [transformation](#) into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the reinforcement of its mandate. The [reform](#) of EASO is still being discussed.

Overall, the reinforcements were higher than the cuts operated by the European Council in the MFF negotiations (see above). The emergency-driven efforts have led to a change of pace in the financing of measures relating to asylum, migration and borders, which nevertheless remain a minor share of the EU budget.<sup>12</sup>

## Some assessments of expenditure in recent years

Given the increasing salience of the policy areas, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) has analysed different aspects of EU expenditure for asylum, migration and borders in various documents. Among them, [Special Report 24/2019](#) stated that EU migration management support in Greece and Italy was relevant, but had not reached its full potential. According to the auditors, emergency relocation schemes had only partially achieved their main objective of alleviating pressure on Greece and Italy. Both countries had increased their asylum-processing capacities, but handling times remained long. Across the EU, problems persisted with the return of irregular migrants. Various recommendations were addressed to the Commission, Frontex and EASO, with a view to building on the lessons learnt.

As regards the Schengen IT systems ([Special Report 20/2019](#)), the Court concluded that they are generally well designed and increasingly used by border guards. Identifying some weaknesses, it recommended that the Commission promote further training on the IT systems, improve data quality procedures, reduce delays in data entry, and address shortcomings more quickly.

In the ECA's [2018 audit of EU agencies](#), EASO was the only agency that did not receive a clean opinion on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying its accounts. Following up its findings from previous years, the Court concluded that EASO's governance and internal control arrangements were improving only slowly, while corrective actions had still to be completed. In addition, the auditors drew attention to a deteriorating situation at EASO with regard to human resources. In the context of the two latest [discharge procedures](#), Parliament refused to grant EASO discharge with respect to the implementation of its budget for financial years [2016](#) and [2017](#).

Conversely, the [Court](#) issued Frontex with a clean opinion on the legality and regularity of its payments. In 2018, Frontex was the fourth largest traditional EU agency based on the contributions it received. One persistent problem identified by the Court since 2014 concerned the proof of equipment-related costs claimed by cooperating countries, which was often deemed to be insufficient. Parliament granted the European Border and Coast Guard Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of its [2016](#) and [2017](#) budgets, making a number of observations and recommendations. Likewise, eu-LISA was granted discharge for financial years [2016](#) and [2017](#).

Carrying out an initial analysis of the budgetary response to the refugee crisis, the [CEPS think tank](#) argued that the approach adopted was focused mainly on the search for more flexibility, leading to a partial reconfiguration of the funding landscape both within and outside the Union. The paper stressed the risks associated with the proliferation of at least partially extra-budgetary instruments, which mainly concerned external action outside Heading 3, recommending that these tools be kept to a minimum for the sake of transparency and democratic scrutiny. As for AMIF and ISF resources under shared management, the author recommended that the ECA pay special attention to the quality of the Member States' audit and control procedures.

Subsequently, a [2018 study](#) requested by Parliament's Committee on Budgets (BUDG) analysed EU funding for migration, asylum and integration policies, arguing for an increase in financial resources to support Member States and EU agencies, and also for more strategic coordination of various EU initiatives relevant to migration. Recommendations included ways to improve the distribution key that allocates resources to Member States for their national programmes, which various analysts have criticised, in part, for its inability to reflect evolving needs.<sup>13</sup>

## Proposals for the 2021-2027 MFF

In the debate on the reform of the EU budget and in the context of the preparations of the proposals for the post-2020 MFF, analysts, policy-makers and stakeholders have regularly included asylum, migration and border management among the policy areas where the contribution of the EU budget should be stepped up. According to the [interinstitutional High-Level Group](#) tasked with a review of the EU's financing system, there has been a gradual recognition of external border management as an EU public good and exposure of the limitations of the current MFF in addressing migration-related responsibilities. Along these lines, one recommendation was that the EU budget should increase its focus on policy areas relating to EU public goods and European added value, where joint action at Union level is deemed not only relevant but indispensable.

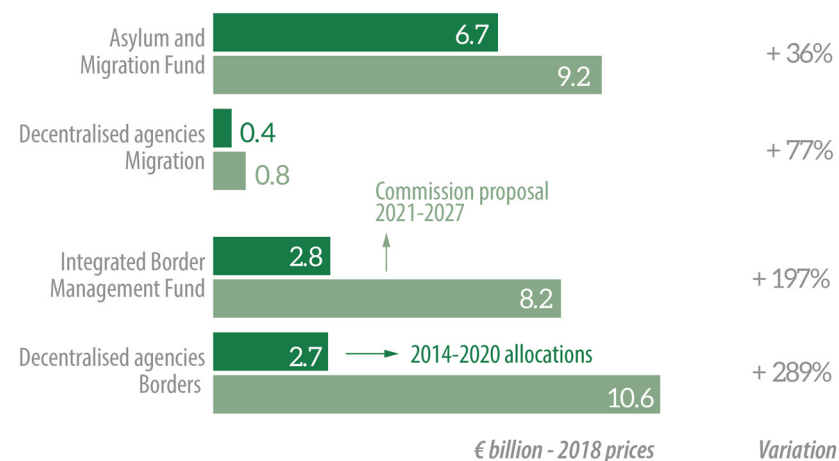
In May 2018, reflecting the high profile that migration and border policies acquired in the wake of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, the [European Commission](#) proposed creating a new and specific 'Migration and border management' heading in the post-2020 MFF. While the new Heading 4 remains one of the smallest in the proposal (see Annex), overall the policy areas would receive almost 1.5 times more resources than in the current programming period (in constant 2018 prices, i.e. rising from €12.7 billion, including flexibility, to €30.8 billion, including the heading margin).<sup>14</sup>

The new Heading 4 in the 2021-2027 MFF would be organised around two policy clusters, 'migration' and 'border management', focusing respectively on a comprehensive approach to managing migration and on strengthening the management of external borders. Each cluster would finance a specific funding programme and the contribution to relevant EU decentralised agencies (see cover image). Figure 1 shows that reinforcements would be proportionally stronger for activities in the field of border management than for those relating to asylum and migration.

The figures for the relevant EU decentralised agencies factored in the reinforcement of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and of EASO as agreed or proposed at the time the European Commission put forward the draft MFF.

The new funding programmes would be the [asylum and migration fund \(AMF\)](#) and the integrated border management fund (IBMF), the latter composed of two separate instruments for [border management and visas](#) (86 % of IBMF resources) and for [customs control equipment](#) (14 %). The two funds would build respectively on the 2014-2020 AMIF and the ISF borders and visa instrument,<sup>15</sup> as

Figure 1 – Components of Heading 4: Commission proposal and 2014-2020 allocations (€ billion, rounded, 2018 prices, EU-27)



Source: EPRS, based on annexes to the European Parliament resolution on the MFF of 14 November 2018.



well as filling gaps in the current MFF for the purchase, maintenance and upgrade of customs control equipment for goods. The IBMF requires two separate instruments on account of the different voting rules in the Council stemming from variable geometry in the home affairs area.

As for the proposed scope of the funds, the AMF should contribute to the efficient management of migration flows, with specific objectives such as strengthening the common European asylum system (CEAS), supporting legal migration to the Member States, countering irregular migration, and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries. Only short-term integration measures would remain under the AMF, while other EU funding instruments would tackle longer-term measures (see below). The IBMF borders and visa instrument should on the one hand support effective European integrated border management at the external borders implemented as a shared responsibility of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and of the national authorities responsible for border management, and on the other contribute to the common visa policy. The IBMF customs control equipment should help the customs union and customs authorities to protect the Union's interests, contributing to appropriate customs control by means of state-of-the-art equipment.

Building on various analyses such as the interim evaluations of the current [AMIF](#) and [ISF borders and visa instrument](#), a Commission 2018 [impact assessment \(IA\)](#) illustrated the rationale behind the proposals for the new generation of funding programmes. One of the main challenges identified was simplification, since the administrative burden was still perceived as too high by beneficiaries and managing authorities, despite some progress in the current programming period. According to an [EPRS initial appraisal](#) of the IA, the proposals appeared to be coherent with the preferred options indicated in the IA. However, the IA template had been adjusted to focus 'on those changes and policy choices that the MFF proposal leaves open', which is deemed to have weakened to some extent its potential to inform decision-making.

As part of the simplification efforts, the resources of the AMF and the IBMF borders and visa instrument under shared management should share a set of financial rules with other EU funds, such as those for cohesion policy, that are implemented under the same management mode ([proposal for a common provisions regulation](#)). Such a feature should help improve their complementarity and enhance their synergies. In the field of migration, for example, while the draft AMF is designed to address short-term needs for the integration of third-country nationals upon arrival, the new generation of cohesion policy funds (in particular, the European Social Fund+ and the European Regional Development Fund) should provide medium- and long-term integration support, facilitating integration into the labour market.

In addition, the European Commission is seeking to increase complementarity with EU external funding instruments, by strengthening the external dimension of the AMF and of the IBMF borders and visa instrument that supports cooperation with and in third countries in the area of migration and border management. Examples of relevant measures to this end include implementation of readmission agreements and secondment of joint liaison officers to third countries.

Other elements in the proposals for the AMF and for the IBMF borders and visa instrument aim to strengthen their capacity to respond to evolving needs. In this respect, 40 % of the financial envelopes of these instruments would be managed through a thematic facility, which is designed to increase their flexibility in allocating resources. The thematic facility is meant to support a variety of measures, including: specific actions (shared management), Union actions (direct and indirect management), and emergency assistance, which could be channelled also through national programmes. In the case of the AMF, resettlement and relocation of asylum-seekers would also qualify for support under the thematic facility.

A further novelty is that the remaining 60 % of the financial envelopes would be allocated to Member States for their national programmes in two tranches: 50 % at the start of the programming period on the basis of the agreed distribution key; and 10 % in 2024, using the latest statistics available for the distribution key. In addition, national programmes could be reinforced through

allocations from the thematic facility where needed. The definition of lists of measures eligible for higher co-financing from the EU budget (90 %) can be seen as a different form of flexibility.

## Institutional reactions to the MFF proposals

Under the Lisbon Treaty, a special legislative procedure applies to the adoption of a new MFF Regulation; it requires unanimity in the Council following Parliament's consent. As for the regulations establishing the provisions applicable to the funds and the decentralised agencies in the areas of migration and border management, Parliament and Council are on an equal footing in the negotiations under the ordinary legislative procedure. Both institutions started their examination of the proposals related and relevant to the MFF immediately. In 2019, an agreement was reached on the further reinforcement of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency with the adoption of [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1896](#). This will gradually increase the number of the agency's operational staff, with a view to reaching a standing corps of 10 000 EU border guards in 2027. An [amended proposal](#) on EASO reform is still being examined. The various proposals linked to the MFF have also triggered comments and observations from other stakeholders, including academics, think tanks and commentators.

## European Parliament position

In November 2018, the European Parliament stood ready to negotiate the post-2020 MFF with the Council, adopting an [interim report](#) that set out its position and detailed figures per heading and fund. Parliament expressed its intention to endow the 'Migration and border management' heading with sufficient resources, based on the Commission proposal. Parliament wanted the level of funding proposed by the Commission for the AMF and the IBMF to be confirmed, supporting the increases that these amounts would imply as compared to the 2014-2020 programming period. In addition, the text called for a further boost to the resources allocated to decentralised agencies in the areas of migration and border management, taking into account the financial implications of the September 2018 proposals on [EASO](#) and the European Border and Coast Guard (see above) that the European Commission had put forward after tabling the draft MFF Regulation. Parliament reiterated its long-standing position that additional political priorities should be financed with fresh resources and should not undermine existing programmes through cuts. Following the European elections of 2019, the [new European Parliament](#) confirmed its negotiating mandate, including all the figures. Table 2 provides an overview of the 2014-2020 resources for migration and border management, Parliament's position and the first figures disclosed by the Council presidency in a negotiating box (see below).

As for the individual funds, Parliament adopted its first reading position on the [AMF](#) in March 2019. On the basis of a report from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), the resolution introduced various changes to the Commission proposal, including a modified name (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund), extended provisions for emergency assistance, and recommended increased involvement of regional and local authorities. The rapporteur for the report (Miriam Dalli, S&D, Malta) was of the opinion that the fund should help to address the various challenges relating to migration and asylum, but stressed that it must not be the primary source of funding for actions in or in relation to third countries. On 24 September 2019, Parliament adopted a decision to open interinstitutional negotiations, but is still awaiting Council's first reading position.

Within Parliament, different committees are responsible for the two strands of the IBMF: the LIBE Committee is in charge of the border management and visa instrument (rapporteur Tanja Fajon, S&D, Slovenia); and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) is taking care of the instrument dealing with customs control equipment (rapporteur: Jiří Pospíšil, EPP, Czechia). In 2019, Parliament adopted its first reading positions for the two strands (in March for [border management and visas](#) and in April for [customs control equipment](#)). Proposed amendments include:

- for the instrument for borders and visas, an increase in the maximum co-financing rate for less well-off Member States, modifications in the provisions relating to emergency assistance, and greater focus on the evaluation of implementation;
- for the instrument for customs control equipment, the fine-tuning of the list of actions that can receive financial support, reinforced monitoring and reporting requirements, and the inclusion of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the coordination mechanism to be activated for actions involving the purchase or upgrade of equipment.

In September and October 2019 respectively, the LIBE and the IMCO committees agreed to open interinstitutional negotiations with the Council. In both cases, Parliament is awaiting Council's first-reading position. In December 2019, [Parliament leaders](#) decided to suspend large parts of the MFF negotiations with Council, due to the latter's failure to make progress in establishing its position on the post-2020 MFF.

Table 2 – Heading 4 in the new MFF: Finnish Presidency negotiating box, Parliament resolution, Commission proposal and 2014-2020 allocations (€ million, 2018 prices, EU-27)

Commitments	2014-2020 (EU-27)	2021-2027 Commission proposal (May 2018)	2021-2027 EP resolution (Nov. 2018)	EP resolution vs Commission proposal	Finnish Presidency negotiating box (Dec 2019)	Finnish Presidency negotiating box vs Commission proposal
<b>4. Migration and border management</b>	<b>10 051</b>	<b>30 829</b>	<b>32 194</b>	<b>+4.4 %</b>	<b>23 389</b>	<b>-24.1%</b>
Asylum and Migration Fund	6 745	9 205	9 205	=	9 205	=
Decentralised agencies for migration	435	768	1 109	+44.4%	N/A	?
Integrated Border Management Fund	2 773	8 237	8 237	=	5 505	-33.2%
Decentralised agencies for border management	2 720	10 587	11 611	+9.7%	N/A	?
- of which European Border and Coast Guard Agency		9 064			6 148	-32.2 %
Margin	-2 621	2 033	2 033	=	N/A	?

Source: EPRS, based on annexes to the European Parliament resolution on the MFF of 14 November 2018 and on Finnish Presidency negotiating box of 5 December 2019.

## European Council and Council positions

In June 2018, the [European Council](#) stated that the post-2020 MFF necessitates flexible instruments allowing for fast disbursements to counter illegal migration. Its conclusions on migration suggest that the European Council considers that this objective should be translated into practice through the earmarking of dedicated and significant components of the IBMF and of the AMF to the external dimension of migration management. While the [European Council](#) is not formally part of the legislative procedure for the adoption of the MFF, it has traditionally played a major role in achieving a unanimous agreement between Member States on the MFF.



However, the MFF negotiations are proving lengthy and complex in the Council, and the initial objective of reaching an agreement before the European elections of May 2019 was not met. In December 2019, the Finnish Presidency of the Council published an updated [MFF draft negotiating box](#), the first to detail figures for the various headings. In line with the outcome of negotiations on past MFFs (see above), the heading containing expenditure for migration and border management is among those that would be cut more significantly in relative terms as compared to the Commission proposals (-24.1 %, versus a 4.2 % reduction for the overall framework). Cuts would be unevenly distributed across Heading 4 (see Table 2). While the amount proposed by the Commission for the AMF is confirmed, the proposals for the IBMF and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency would be affected by significant reductions. The document does not specify how the remaining cut, which amounts to around €1.8 billion, would be allocated between other decentralised agencies and the overall margin of Heading 4. The draft negotiating box takes into account the June 2018 conclusions of the European Council, by providing for the thematic facilities of both the AMF and the IBMF to include dedicated and significant components devoted to tailored actions to address the external dimension of migration management.

The [European Parliament's negotiating team for the MFF](#) and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen criticised the draft negotiating box, arguing that a reduced MFF would not allow the EU to meet key policy objectives, including those for border management. According to [press sources](#), Member States' first reactions to the Finnish document showed that national delegations' positions are still significantly distant. The [European Council](#) of December 2019 discussed the Finnish proposal, calling on its President, Charles Michel, to take the negotiations forward with the aim of reaching a final agreement. However, no timeline was included. A few days later, given the lack of progress in the Council, [Parliament leaders](#) agreed to freeze large parts of the MFF negotiations (see above).

As for the individual funds, the Council adopted a partial mandate for negotiations on the [customs control equipment instrument](#) in December 2018 and partial general approaches for the negotiations on the [AMF](#) and the [border management and visa instrument](#) some months later.

## Advisory committees

The [European Economic and Social Committee \(EESC\)](#) welcomes the AMF and the IBMF, the proposed increases in their financial resources, and the importance given to flexibility in both funds. Considering that the AMF and the IBMF should help a comprehensive European migration and asylum policy to move forward, the EESC regrets the absence of any mention of regular migration channels to the EU, and qualifies the removal of the word integration from the name of the AMF as worrying. It calls for the application of the principle of solidarity to be enhanced.

Reasserting the need for a comprehensive European asylum and migration policy based on the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, the [Committee of the Regions \(CoR\)](#) welcomes the proposed reinforcement of the AMF and calls for it to be even stronger. The CoR recommends modifying the distribution key of resources among Member States and ensuring that financial resources are accessible to local and regional authorities, underlining the crucial role of the latter in the integration of migrants.

## Stakeholder views<sup>16</sup>

[Professor Iain Begg](#) sees the Commission proposals for the new MFF as a compromise between three competing sets of demands, one of which is higher funding for new priorities such as asylum, migration and borders. His analysis depicts the significant increase in the resources for borders and migration as among the most striking elements of the proposals, but notes that, nevertheless, proposed funding remains moderate in scale, given its low starting point. The [Bruegel think-tank](#) gives a prudently positive assessment of the MFF proposals, mentioning higher allocations for policy

areas that provide European public goods, such as migration and border management, among the positive aspects of the package.

The [European Council on Refugees and Exiles \(ECRE\)](#) argues that the resources proposed for the AMF should not suffer any cuts in the MFF negotiations, since this fund can play a significant role in promoting fair, effective and increasingly harmonised asylum systems in the EU as well as dignity of third country nationals in return operations. The ECRE calls for a limit to the share of AMF and IBMF resources that can be spent outside the EU (5 % and 4 % respectively), considering that the absence of such a cap could undermine the pursuit of policy objectives relating to asylum, migration and borders within the Union. Other recommendations include: modifications to the suggested criteria for the allocation of funding to Member States; and consideration of updated needs assessments and of the implementation records for the allocation of the second tranche of resources.

In addition, the ECRE has joined forces with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to produce a [reflection paper](#) on the proposals for the new generation of EU funds for asylum, migration and integration. The document identifies a number of weaknesses and possible remedies to them, recommending among other points modifying the AMF distribution key to reflect better actual needs and capacities in participating Member States. Looking at the role that the European Social Fund + (ESF+) is expected to play in the integration of migrants, the authors suggest ring-fencing relevant resources within this fund.

A paper published by [Istituto Affari Internazionali \(IAI\)](#) argues that the budgetary proposals for migration and border management (including their external dimension) seem to be influenced by a short-term crisis approach, putting a significant focus on border control and reduction of migration flows despite the significant drop in the numbers of unauthorised arrivals in the EU registered in recent years. However, the author praises positive commitments and initiatives in the proposals. While acknowledging that emergency preparedness remains relevant, the paper concludes that the reinforcement of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency could have a more positive impact if matched with a real reform of the CEAS and greater focus on long-term policy objectives.

According to an analysis published by the [Scottish Centre on European Relations \(SCER\)](#), irregular migration and a more common approach to asylum have had a significant impact on the Commission proposals. The author notes that Member States' different needs and political interests relating to migration make common action difficult. However, he is of the opinion that the EU's approach should be less defensive and more strategic, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the response to irregular migration in the longer term. While some aspects of the budgetary proposals are considered negatively, others, such as the promotion of increased burden sharing and the upfront consideration of the role of EU's external expenditure, are seen to have the potential to bring some improvements.

The [Jacques Delors Institute](#) considers that the budgetary proposals reflect the current emphasis on border management rather than asylum and integration. Analysing European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's Agenda for Europe, the author notes her strong commitment to the deployment of the new European and Border Coast Guard. In addition, the paper recommends that the new Commission should try and rebalance the allocation of resources between the AMF and the IBMF, strengthen EU support for national asylum and migration integration policies, and ensure that cohesion and structural funds complement the AMF (e.g. by allocating appropriate resources to the municipalities that take part in the relocation of asylum seekers).

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A. D'Alfonso, [EU Funds for asylum, migration and borders](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> A. D'Alfonso, [External border control and asylum management as EU common goods: A budgetary perspective](#), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 2019.
- <sup>3</sup> Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) is one of the configurations under which the Council adopts legislation, in most cases on an equal footing with the European Parliament. In addition to asylum, migration and borders, the JHA Council tackles policy areas such as judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, civil protection, the fight against serious and organised crime and terrorism, and internal security.
- <sup>4</sup> Programmes under a variety of headings may finance measures that are to some extent relevant to asylum, migration and borders. However, the budgetary information produced by the European Commission does not allow the amount of resources involved to be identified.
- <sup>5</sup> In addition, the EU budget can finance pilot projects and preparatory actions that can result in the development of new funding programmes or the incorporation of new categories of measures in the existing funds.
- <sup>6</sup> The other strand is the ISF Police, whose objectives include: supporting national efforts to prevent cross-border crime; promoting cooperation between law-enforcement authorities; and increasing the capacity to manage security threats.
- <sup>7</sup> For more detail on the two funds, please see: A. D'Alfonso, [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\)](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2015; and A. D'Alfonso, [Internal Security Fund \(ISF\)](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2016.
- <sup>8</sup> S. Jędrzejewska, [Revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework \(Article 19, MFF Regulation\)](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2015.
- <sup>9</sup> M. De Somer, [Dublin and Schengen: A tale of two cities](#), European Policy Centre, Discussion Paper, 15 June 2018.
- <sup>10</sup> For an overview, see: N. Atanassov and A. Radjenovic, [EU asylum, borders and external cooperation on migration: Recent developments](#), EPRS, European Parliament, September 2018.
- <sup>11</sup> A. D'Alfonso, [op. cit.](#), European University Institute, 2019.
- <sup>12</sup> In addition, the response to the 2015-2016 refugee crisis included various measures relating to the external dimension of asylum, migration and borders. A different heading (4, Global Europe) provided the main source of financing for additional measures, which had to utilise flexibility tools as well as instruments at least partially outside the EU budget.
- <sup>13</sup> For example, the study in question notes that '[t]he UK has the largest share of the basic allocation of AMIF at 16.3 %, even though its share of total non-EU immigrants in 2015 was smaller (11.5 %), and its share of first time asylum seekers in 2015-17 was smaller still (3.5 %)'.
- <sup>14</sup> Both figures apply to the EU-27, taking into account the UK's withdrawal from the EU.
- <sup>15</sup> The new Internal Security Fund would be based on the current ISF Police, under a different 2021-2027 MFF heading.
- <sup>16</sup> This section aims to provide a flavour of the debate and is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all different views on the proposals.

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## ANNEX

