Press release | 04.12.2012

EU budget

Bad deal for EU gets provisional green light following volte-face by MEPs

A draft agreement on the EU's 2013 budget and provisions to cover shortfalls under the 2012 budget looks set to be endorsed, following an indicative vote in the European Parliament's budget committee. The agreement will now be voted by both the European Parliament and Council. The Greens have criticised the draft agreement, which will both fail to bridge the shortfalls under the 2012 budget (1) and continue the trend of under-budgeting for 2013. Commenting on the situation, Green budgetary spokesperson **Helga Trüpel** stated:

“This is a bad deal for Europe and for sensible budgeting, committing the EU to a continued cycle of under-budgeting and shortfalls for programmes already committed to. With EU governments only agreeing to meet part of the shortfalls for 2012, the 2013 budget will have to fill the resulting €3 billion gap in payments to programmes in EU member states that have already been committed to. This will lead to inevitable shortfalls next year, perpetuating the current cycle.

"The volte-face by MEPs from big political groups, who have repeatedly stated the need for EU governments to deliver on their commitments, is clearly a major source of regret. The shortfalls faced by key European social, research and cohesion programmes are not due to new or disproportionate budget lines: EU governments are simply refusing to deliver on commitments agreed to last year. Ultimately, it is beneficiaries in EU member states that will suffer as a result - notably in crisis-hit countries - making Council's irresponsible position all the more incomprehensible and further undermining public trust in the EU.

"The EP has managed to prevent an even worse outcome, particularly by limiting cuts to EU spending on competitiveness and R&D, which the Council had wanted. However, the budget continues to get its priorities wrong: notably for the ITER nuclear fusion project. This over-budget pipe-dream will continue to get a large chunk of EU funds (€850 million in 2013), with no cuts foreseen. Meanwhile, with no government willing to fight its corner, EU development aid spending is set to be slashed, despite economies of scale that can be achieved at EU-level."

(1) Of the around €9 billion worth of open bills under the EU budget 2012, which are supposed to be delivered by the year-end, the draft agreement will only deliver on around €6 billion. These shortfalls include under the Erasmus student exchange programme, the EU's research framework programme and, particularly, under EU structural funds.

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Helga Trüpel

Member

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