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Press release | 23.11.2012

EU budget

Backward-looking EU budget looms, as haggling leads to wrong priorities being set

The much anticipated budget summit on the EU's multiannual financial framework ended without final agreement but with EU leaders moving towards changes in the overall size and make-up of the budget proposals. The Greens hit out at the “progress”, which not only cuts the ambition of the EU budget, but also sets totally wrong priorities by cutting spending in future-oriented areas, whilst maintaining unsustainable spending lines. Commenting on the outcome, Greens/EFA co-presidents **Dany Cohn-Bendit** and **Rebecca Harms** stated:

“*The revised budget proposals that are beginning to take shape following the haggling among EU leaders are worrying. Inevitably, the horse-trading has led to totally wrong priorities being set. What is now on the table is a backward-looking budget, that will fail to capitalise on the potential for the EU budget to be an instrument for stimulating economic recovery."*

Green budget spokesperson **Helga Trüpel** added:

"The EU budget should be a central tool for tackling the economic crisis in Europe. In order to emerge from the crisis, we should be investing more in research, education, green technologies and the sustainable transformation of our energy sector. Not only does the EU budget represent a value-for-money way to deliver this across Europe, it is also the only real hope for crisis-hit countries like Greece, which are facing draconian budget cuts at home.

“Sadly, not only are EU leaders cutting the overall level, they are also wielding their knives on these future-oriented elements of the budget, whilst caving to demands to preserve spending in outdated programmes, where fundamental reform is needed.

"As well as fundamentally reforming areas like agriculture spending, there is a need to tackle the reimbursement of EU officials on higher salaries: although small as a proportion of the budget, this is symbolically important at a time of fiscal cutbacks elsewhere.

"Council president Van Rompuy and the EU governments need to remember that agreement on the EU budget implies unanimity in the Council plus one: the European Parliament's endorsement is also necessary and its position must be taken into account. The Greens will be pushing to ensure MEPs do not accept some counter-productive, cobbled-together compromise.

"It is high time to introduce a meaningful system of own resources for financing the EU budget. This would end the self-defeating horse-trading on the budget and allow for clearer budgetary planning for national governments and the EU. There is also a need to end the outdated rebate system. With a vanguard of EU member states set to forge ahead with a financial transaction tax, part of the revenues from this tax should be directed towards an EU own resources system, with ring-fenced funding for development and climate aid."

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