



Young people to be a priority when EP starts work on 2011 budget

Young people should be a priority in EU action next year, it emerged on Tuesday, as the Budgets Committee started work on the EU's 2011 budget. This budget will be the first to be decided under the Lisbon Treaty, which gives Parliament a full say over EU spending and also changes the way in which the budget is negotiated.

"I hope that the budget that the Commission will propose will be very much centred on youth – not only as an age, but in a wider sense, relating to the transition time between studies and work", said Sidonia Elżbieta Jędrzejewska (EPP, PL), who leads Parliament's work on the 2011 budget, presenting her ideas to the Budgets Committee on Tuesday.

In the debate with members of other political groups, MEPs backed her priorities, adding that innovation and research, the fight against climate change and EU's new external action service should be Parliament's other priorities in budget negotiations with other EU institutions. The Jędrzejewska report on Parliament's budget priorities is to be adopted in committee on 4 March and in plenary three weeks later.

Lisbon Treaty changes to budget work

Whereas the Nice treaty restricted Parliament's budget powers to about half the EU budget (covering almost everything except agriculture), Parliament now has a full say on all items.

Another new feature is that the Lisbon Treaty makes the EU's "financial perspective" long-term budgetary framework legally binding. The financial perspective sets EU expenditure ceilings per year and per heading. The current financial perspective covers 2007 - 2013 and a mid-term review is planned for this year.

The Lisbon Treaty also changes the annual budget procedure, by abolishing the "first reading" of the annual budget, traditionally used for tactics and setting out the institutions' priorities. Instead, the budget must be decided either during the Council's and the Parliament's readings or, which is more likely, during a conciliation procedure immediately after Parliament's reading.

The European Commission is soon to propose the legislation necessary for implementing the new Lisbon Treaty budget rules.

However, the traditional distinction between "commitment" and "payment" appropriations under each budget line will remain. "Commitments" refer to how much the EU may commit (e.g. by signing a contract or starting a tender procedure) in a certain year. "Payments" refer to money actually paid out in a given year. The ceilings for 2011 are €142,269 billion in commitments and €134,263 billion in payments.

Budget 2011 calendar - major events (all dates are provisional)

Preparatory work in Parliament and Council

23 February: Budgets Committee: presentation of draft report on budgetary priorities for 2011

4 March: Budgets Committee adopts the report on budgetary priorities for 2011

16 March: budgetary orientations in council

Press release

24 - 25 March: Parliament to approve budgetary priorities for 2011 in plenary session

Commission presents budget proposal

28 April: draft budget to be approved by the Commission and presented to Parliament's Budgets Committee

Negotiations among the three institutions

5-8 July: Council to approve its position on the draft budget

28-30 September: Budgets Committee to vote on budgetary amendments

Week 40 or 41: Budgets Committee to vote on draft resolutions

18-22 October: EP to approve amendments to Council position. EP President to convene Conciliation Committee.

Weeks 43 to 45: Conciliation Committee to establish a joint text within 21 days (i.e. before 12 November)

22-25 November: Parliament to approve joint text in plenary session

Parliament has two rapporteurs for next year's budget: Sidonia Elżbieta Jędrzejewska is responsible for the European Commission budget, which is the biggest part, and Helga Trüpel (Greens/EFA, DE), works on all other institutions' budgets.

In the chair : Alain Lamassoure (EPP, FR)
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