

Last call to EU leaders on MFF: To be consistent with our strategic goals, we need more political will and institutional coherence for an ambitious EU budget!

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Luca Jahier, EESC President

Statement by

When I look at the proposals brought forward initially by the Commission, and now, last week, by the Finnish presidency on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), I can only be disappointed and genuinely concerned.

Disappointed because already the Commission proposal of May 2018 remained too prudent. Although the EU executive didn't have an easy task, as it had to deal with the announced departure of the UK and with a number of Member States opposed to go above 1% of the Gross National

Income (GNI), it managed to craft a budget proposal which contains some timely, forward looking reform suggestions.

But let's face it, the proposed ceiling of 1,11% of the GNI is not enough to credibly deliver on the political agenda presented by the von der Leyen Commission and approved by EU leaders.

Now, the proposal of the Finnish Presidency, which will steer the discussion in this week's General Affairs' Council and in the upcoming European Council, with a volume of the MFF of only 1.07% of the GNI, is clearly a step that goes even further in the wrong direction.

A low budget will clearly prevent the EU to deliver on the European citizens' requests. Cutting deeply in the EU cohesion funds and in the Common Agricultural Policy, policies that have worked well and have shown the added value of the EU, is not the answer.

In times of rising populism, it is of the utmost importance to give the EU the means it needs to deliver on the priorities set out by the Member States. The European elections of May 2019 have given us a clear message: Europeans want more not less Europe. We need to send positive signals to the European citizens, not negative ones.

The new #VDLCommission is now fully operational and Ursula von der Leyen leads a solid College, eager to push forward a positive and ambitious agenda, starting with the Green Deal.

The decision on the MFF is a political decision, not a technical one. It is about deciding whether or not we want a Europe that punches above its weight to fight global competition and that has confidently decided to be sustainable, fair and inclusive. In short, a Europe that still wants to play a major global role in the XXI Century.

The EESC and European civil society know all too well where they want to stand and call for a strong EU budget, beyond what the Commission or the Finnish presidency proposed, and in line with the European Parliament's position of 1,3% of GNI.

Now, more than ever we can't just dream of a new Europe without providing the means to deliver it. The risks and the costs would be too high and devastating for future generations of Europeans.

Background:

On **19 September 2018**, the EESC has adopted its [opinion on the Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#), on the basis of the Commission's proposal of 2 May, in which it calls for a strong EU budget, giving to the EU the means to achieve its current political goals, and calling for an increase of the own resources.

On [2 May](#) and on [19 September](#), the **EESC President Luca Jahier has issued statements** saying that the new MFF budget must be able to tackle critical challenges: economic and social convergence, social cohesion, migration, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change. These challenges can be transformed into huge opportunities for Europe and the European project. This is what the [Europe@work](#) --Employers, trade unions and civil society at large--wants, he said.

This is also the core of the [EESC Resolution of October 2019](#) that the EESC has sent to the new Commission.

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