



European Economic  
and Social Committee

## STATEMENT by the President

20/02/2020

**Statement by Luca Jahier, President of the European Economic and Social Committee during the EESC Plenary**

### **MFF: This is not a battle of numbers, but a battle of visions**

EU leaders are expected to make substantial progress towards reaching agreement on the long-term budget, the MFF, but Member States continue to be deeply divided to reach a compromise. Or maybe they will reach a compromise at the lowest possible price.

If no agreement is achieved, we risk yet another paralysis, which we cannot afford in the current geopolitical situation.

The urgent priorities awaiting the EU and the risk of post-Brexit talks cannot drag on as they will absorb the energy for other priorities-the migration package, the Green deal, the digital transition, the ecological transition, to cite just a few.

It is time to find the courage to make the right choices.

**This is not a battle of numbers, but a battle of visions.** The vision of the new Commission "A union that Strives for more" and the new Strategic agenda that EU leaders set in Sibiu, reasserted during the European Councils of July and December 2019, must be fulfilled by coherent decisions with the new MFF.

You cannot decide to refurbish a house without providing the right budget for it. I can only express our full support for what has been said by EP President Sassoli, and unanimously confirmed by all the political groups of the Parliament in the joint letter. Indeed, we are still €230 billion apart at the moment. The Council's proposal is far from acceptable.

**If we want to initiate an ambitious European agenda, then there is no secret: The EU needs adequate resources.** We have expressed this position over a year and a half ago in an opinion adopted by an overwhelming majority and reiterated it in many occasions.

If the Member States are not available to pay more for fulfilling ambitious priorities they have already agreed and approved, they have activate consistent own-resources. We must finally achieve what has been discussed for the past 15 years, without decision yet.

We must be deliver on with what the European citizens have asked for in the last European elections. European citizens deserve respect and their vote should be heard, not ignored!

I believe it is time to be consistent and mobilize all forces. It is time to take action and put on our countries, so that our governments have the courage to find the political will and the necessary ambition to follow suit on what they have already agreed.

In this delicate phase, I believe that we can't but be vocal and strongly united on our positions, together with the European Parliament.

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