



The financial perspective 2007-2013:

Green 10 briefing for MEPs on the European Council's agreement of December 2005



Summary

The Green 10 are deeply disappointed with the political agreement on the financial perspective adopted in December, which fails to support the EU's crucial environmental ambitions and will exacerbate wildlife declines throughout the European Union. We are particularly concerned that the budget for environmentally friendly farming under the EU's rural development programme has been slashed both compared to the Commission's proposals and to existing spending, and funding for the environment (LIFE+) is likely to be squeezed.

Environmental NGOs welcomed the Parliament's First Reading on the financial perspective which sought to ensure sufficient funding for the EU's environmental commitments, e.g. Natura 2000, and to integrate the environment into the EU's spending programmes.

We therefore call on MEPs to improve the European Council's agreement on the financial perspective in four key areas in the forthcoming negotiations in preparation for a Second Reading vote in March or April.

1. The environment budget: LIFE+ (Heading 2)

The EU's environment budget, LIFE+, will fund a number of measures to support the implementation of EU legislation on nature protection, climate change, chemicals, water policy and other essential programmes. It is crucial that this spending programme, for which the Commission's proposed budget was EUR 2.19 billion (0.2 per cent of the overall EU budget), is adequately funded. Yet, the final agreement does not allocate a budget to LIFE+ in the next financing period and it looks likely that the budget will be cut further, to a mere EUR 1.5 billion.

The implementation and enforcement of existing environmental and health policy would be severely affected by cuts with key projects under programmes such as Natura 2000, Civil Protection, Clean Air for Europe, Water Framework Directive, European Climate Change Programme and the Environment and Health Action Plan, all suffering. This would sharply conflict with the sustainable development goals outlined in the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy and would result in the EU failing to achieve its international environmental commitments.

The Green 10 therefore urges Parliament to prioritise the LIFE+ environment budget in forthcoming negotiations, and to seek to maintain the figure of EUR 9.5 billion, which Parliament overwhelmingly adopted at its First Reading.

2. Common Agricultural Policy (Heading 2)

The rural development budget funds measures to boost farmland biodiversity, to restructure the rural economy and to improve the quality of life in rural areas. These constitute tangible public benefits which are crucial to the EU's social and environmental objectives. This budget has, however, been cut by 22 per cent compared to the Commission's original

