# European Parliament pushes for larger EU budget with safeguards for environmental funds



The European Parliament is set to adopt a significant position this week on the long-term budget of the European Union, with the approval of the report titled “A revamped long-term budget for the Union in a changing world” expected on May 7th. This move comes amid increasing pressure for the EU to translate its green rhetoric into substantial financial commitments.

The forthcoming budget, known as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), serves as a pivotal fiscal blueprint over a seven-year period, representing approximately 1% of the EU's GDP. This budget is instrumental in financing various sectors, including cohesion, agriculture, climate action, and nature protection. The decisions made regarding the next MFF are anticipated to have lasting impacts on the EU’s approach to environmental issues into the 2030s, particularly at a time when national budgets are strained by inflation, debt, and defence concerns.

While the Parliament's report acknowledges the critical urgency surrounding the climate and biodiversity crises and states the need for a “bigger budget than ever before”, critics argue that it falls significantly short of the necessary ambition and financial clarity. Ester Asin, Director of the WWF European Policy Office, highlighted this concern, stating, “It’s not enough to agree that we need more money for climate and biodiversity. Without bold, binding targets, this budget risks becoming yet another missed opportunity.”

Encouragingly, there are some positive developments within the report. Notably, the Parliament endorses the LIFE programme, an existing EU fund that supports environmental legislation, ensuring it remains distinct rather than being absorbed into a broader “Competitiveness” fund. This preservation is seen as crucial for achieving targeted and accountable environmental outcomes.

Furthermore, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are showing resistance against recent suggestions from the Commission to consolidate various EU programmes into single national investment plans. Critics assert that such centralisation could marginalise local authorities—often most effective in implementing climate solutions—and diminish civil societal oversight.

Another significant statement from the Parliament is its opposition to utilising climate and environmental funds for the EU’s increasing defence and security expenditure. This stance comes at a critical juncture when geopolitical concerns threaten to overshadow environmental priorities in EU discussions.

However, the report’s shortcomings on concrete financial strategies remain a concern. The issue of subsidies is particularly pertinent, with calls for the Commission to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies. Research by the WWF has indicated that nearly €32.1 billion annually in Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funding—around 60%—actively undermines biodiversity. Redirecting a fraction of these funds could markedly lessen the EU’s substantial nature investment deficit.

As negotiations surrounding the MFF advance, doubts linger regarding the report's potential effectiveness in driving meaningful change. The member states exhibit a well-known reluctance to increase national contributions, highlighting the need for the Commission and Parliament to enter discussions equipped with more than lofty ideals. The urgency of the climate crisis requires concrete policy actions rather than mere aspirational rhetoric.

The pressures of climate change—evident in the growing frequency of wildfires, floods, and ecosystem failures—underscore the necessity for a decisive response. As the clock ticks, the effectiveness of the upcoming budget will ultimately hinge on the EU’s ability to convert its commitments into financial reality, demonstrating genuine leadership on environmental issues.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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