

# Multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020

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The Council discussed, in public session, for the first time on the basis of the negotiating box, the following areas of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the 2014-2020 period:

cohesion policy,

- the "[Connecting Europe](#)" facility,
- Heading 2 (sustainable growth: natural resources), and
- [The provisions relating to the five funds](#) belonging to these policy fields: (i) [the European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#); (ii) [the European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#); (iii) [the Cohesion Fund \(CF\)](#) ; (iv) the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) ; (v) the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

During the debate, a number of delegations voiced concerns about the **proposed overall level of expenditure** in times of fiscal consolidation and asked for **cuts to be made in all headings**.

Some member states considered the proposed amount for cohesion policy as a minimum, whereas others viewed the amount proposed for the common agricultural policy as a minimum.

## Cohesion policy:

Several member states expressed concerns relating either to the new category of transition regions per se or to its scope.

Some of these member states supported, however, the idea of a safety net, providing for a minimum allocation level to each member state, compared to its level during the 2007-2013 period.

Other member states supported the concept of transition regions but were sceptical on the safety net.

**"Connecting Europe" facility:** many delegations **welcomed the concept** of the "Connecting Europe" facility, but some had difficulties with the proposed transfer to the facility of EUR 10 billion from the cohesion fund.

## Common agricultural policy:

- Some delegations considered the proposed **convergence of direct aids** per hectare in terms of scope and timeframe as insufficiently ambitious. Others, however, found it too drastic.
- Delegations welcomed the objective of improving the **environmental performance** of the common agricultural policy but questioned the "greening" proposed by the Commission. Member states considered the use of 30% of direct payments for this as too high and asked for more flexibility.
- Opinions were divided on the proposed capping of **support to large farms**.
- Many delegations insisted on the importance of **rural development** and the criteria for the allocation of support to this policy area.

**Concerning the rules governing the five funds under the common strategic framework**, some member states stressed the importance of macro-economic conditionality. Others were sceptical about it,

unless it was extended to other types of expenditure. In the coming weeks, the presidency intends to supplement those parts of the negotiating box that have already been presented with language on own resources, the remaining element belonging to the MFF negotiating package.

**Timetable:**

- The General Affairs Council of 29 May will hold a first discussion on a comprehensive version of the negotiating box covering all elements of the MFF negotiating package.
- Ministers for European Affairs will continue their work on the MFF at an informal meeting in Horsens (Denmark) on 10 and 11 June.

The European Council will discuss the MFF for the first time on 28 and 29 June. The aim is to finalise the MFF negotiations by the end of this year.