

Multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020

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In a public session, the Irish Presidency informed ministers on the state of play in the discussions with the European Parliament on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) and received guidance from ministers for the negotiations with the European Parliament.

Since the February 2013 European Council, the Irish Presidency has had extensive contacts with the European Parliament on the MFF. Work has also started in Council on the MFF Regulation and the Interinstitutional Agreement on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management.

The Irish Presidency's objective is to reach agreement with the Parliament on the MFF by the end of June and to translate the overall MFF agreement into legal texts. It also aims to reach agreement on the around **70 pieces of sector-specific legislation** underpinning the EU's funding programmes. This would allow the new programmes to start on time in January 2014.

Ministers supported the Presidency's efforts to find a compromise with the European Parliament on the next MFF in a timely manner. They expressed their willingness to discuss the four key elements of the European Parliament's resolution:

1. flexibility,
2. revision,
3. own resources,
4. unity of the budget.

Some ministers also stressed that substantial elements of Parliament's demands had already been agreed by the European Council in February, in particular as regards flexibility.

Following the Council's discussion, the Presidency will renew its contacts with the European Parliament and ask Coreper to continue work on the MFF regulation and the interinstitutional agreement. The General Affairs Council will return to the MFF for a more substantial discussion on 21 May 2013.