

Policy challenges and budgetary means of the enlarged Union 2007-2013

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PURPOSE : to present the communication from the Commission on the Financial Perspectives 2007 - 2013.

CONTENT : to recall, in February 2004, the Commission laid out a political project for the Union to tackle the key challenges facing Europe and its citizens until 2013. Its objective was to launch a forward looking debate on the European Union's goals, and the tools required to make these goals a reality. If action is to be in place by the target date of 1 January 2007, the debate now needs to move into a new phase. Attention needs to shift to the practical measures required to put the political framework into practice. To this end, the Commission has been working to develop a set of detailed policy proposals. Many of these proposals are now ready. So this is a good moment to take stock of the work done since February, recall the value added of the EU action as well as expenditure required to further the political project proposed by the Commission for 2007-2013, and explain how the delivery instruments of this project will be simplified and rationalised. This is the purpose of this paper.

In the light of the above, the Commission has tested the value added by proposed expenditure in all policy areas concerned by the political project for the period 2007-2013. To perform this test, the Commission has used the following criteria, in order to address the problems highlighted above:

- Effectiveness: cases where EU action is the only way to get results to create missing links, avoid fragmentation, and realise the potential of a border-free Europe;
- Efficiency: cases where the EU offers better value for money, because externalities can be addressed, resources or expertise can be pooled, an action can be better coordinated;
- Synergy: cases where EU action is necessary to complement, stimulate, and leverage action to reduce disparities, raise standards, and create synergies.

As stated, the Commission laid out the principles on the basis of which it announced that it will simplify and rationalise its financial instruments. The new structure represents a major step in the simplification of EU action. It aims at ensuring that spending programmes operate under principles of good governance which bring efficiency savings, and to make action more accessible and more user-friendly. The package of measures adopted today will be complemented with other proposals, to come later, in the areas of external relations, research, and freedom, security and justice.

The result of this rationalisation is presented below by budgetary Heading:

- Heading 1: Sustainable Growth : to reach this target, action is required across three key axes: making Europe into a dynamic knowledge-based economy geared towards growth; reinforcing cohesion; and ensuring the sustainable management and protection of natural resources.
- Heading 2: Conservation and Management of Natural Resources : with significant sums of public money to be devoted to the objectives under Heading 2, it is all the more important that the instruments and delivery mechanisms are in place to implement efficiently. With the CAP reforms of 2003 and 2004 so fresh and with agricultural spending fixed to 2013, the framework for the period covered by the Financial Perspectives is set. Although most environmental action is delivered by mainstreaming into other actions,

there remains a need for an instrument to deliver action of a uniquely environmental nature. The LIFE+ programme would seek to contribute to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU environment policy and legislation.

- Heading 3: Citizenship/Strengthening the EU as an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice : the Freedom of movement and solidarity in the area of external borders, asylum and immigration programme will support the implementation of solidarity in this area and will represent the bulk of funding for freedom, security and justice. The creation of an Agency for External Borders in the field of migratory flows management has already been proposed by the Commission. The Security programme will strengthen the prevention of crime and terrorism, reinforce cooperation and exchange between law enforcement authorities. The Justice and Fundamental Rights Programme will seek to promote judicial cooperation, easy access to justice and offer enhanced legal certainty, both to business and citizens, to back up the growth in cross-border situations. A food safety programme will mainly seek to combat animal diseases, facilitate better cooperation between EU laboratories, narrow the gap in food safety standards within and between countries and ensure protection of the whole food chain.

A consumer policy and public health programme will provide sustained capacity building among consumer organizations. The European Food Safety Authority and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control should provide the necessary assistance (regulatory and executive) required by the Commission in the execution of its tasks. Fostering European culture and diversity is important. A solidarity and rapid reaction instrument will provide citizens with a European response in the event of major disasters.

- Heading 4: Europe as a global partner : over time, the Union has developed a broad spectrum of external relations tools (common trade policy, cooperation under bilateral and multilateral agreements, development cooperation, common foreign and security policy, common defence and security policy, humanitarian aid and financial assistance, as well as the external projection of internal policies: energy, environment, transport, justice and home affairs, etc). The creation of new budget lines through the annual budgetary procedure, and the subsequent adoption of ad hoc legal bases for their implementation, has added to the proliferation of instruments.