



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**NOTE**

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from :	Foreign Relations Counsellors Working Group (RELEX)
to :	Political and Security Committee/COREPER
Subject :	CFSP Budget: Orientations 2014-2015

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1. Following the Political and Security Committee (PSC) discussion of 5 February 2014 on the EEAS paper on CFSP budget orientations for 2014 and 2015 and in accordance with the procedure agreed on policy orientations for the CFSP Budget (doc. 17270/13), RELEX Counsellors, at their meetings on 17 February and 3, 7, 14 and 16 April 2014, discussed the EEAS paper.
2. During discussions, delegations underlined that, particularly in light of the reduced CFSP Budget, robust prioritisation and strategic choices, must be undertaken throughout the whole of the CFSP Budget for the EU to be able to respond to unexpected situations and challenges (including through possible new CSDP Missions), without prejudice to the need to finance existing commitments, notably the current CSDP Missions which remain the major component of the budget. Delegations underlined that the PSC should continue to have regular discussions on the CFSP budget priorities, having in mind the need to ensure maximum efficiency in its allocation. The recent discussions in RELEX on the financing actions under Article 28 were also recalled (doc. 5512/14).

3. In order to maintain flexibility within the CFSP budget and in view of the current budget constraints in other External Financial Instruments (EFIs), delegations re-emphasised that RELEX Counsellors must be informed of any budget transfer from the CFSP budget to either other budget lines or other Headings in order to allow for an exchange of views, without prejudice to Article 26 of the Financial Regulation. Delegations welcomed the Commission's commitment to inform RELEX as early as possible and to maintain the CFSP budget's flexibility as an instrument for crisis response, throughout the twelve month budget period.
4. Delegations also emphasised the need to regularly receive more comprehensive information on financing being provided by the Union under the External Financial Instruments. In particular, this would ensure more effectiveness in planning new CSDP Missions as well as in preparing for Mission transition with a view to building on the achieved results of the Missions. In line with the comprehensive approach and in order to improve coherence and complementarity of the Union's external action by drawing on all instruments and resources the availability of this type of information is key for decision-makers. In this respect consultation processes between the EEAS and the Commission should be intensified to achieve a comprehensive financial outlook on geographical and policy areas where activities are financed from both the CFSP budget, EFIs, and other Heading IV external action budgetary lines. The EEAS and the Commission should inform RELEX on developments/progress in this regard by the end of June 2014.
5. Some delegations indicated that the geographical areas of focus proposed for the CFSP budget priorities should be more balanced and should also cover other regions and possible new challenges and recent developments which may have an impact on the CFSP budget.
6. On the issue of EUSRs, delegations noted that the information in the EEAS paper referred only to 2014 and underlined that adequate financing must be budgeted for EUSRs for 2015. Delegations also stressed that the question of the future role and representation of the EU in Central Asia and regarding the MEPP, including the appointment of EUSRs, remains open.

7. As regards Non-proliferation and disarmament, delegations welcomed the trend of co-financing and noted that, when possible, geographic priorities should also be considered when deciding on projects to be pursued so as to increase complementarity and visibility of the Union's action. Delegations also recalled that new implementing agencies or contractors should be identified where this is feasible and appropriate. It was highlighted that flexibility will also be required as regards prioritisation of these projects.
  8. RELEX noted that after taking into account the level of financing required for existing actions there might still be a modest margin available to envisage additional actions and that the results of the Strategic Reviews of EUPOL Afghanistan and EULEX Kosovo may also have significant impact on the final amount available in the budget. However RELEX also noted that some Mission costs, in particular in the area of security, may increase over time, and as Mission activity expands.
  9. RELEX will revert to the issue after PSC discussion.
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