



Council of the  
European Union

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### OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Budget guidelines for 2021  
– *Council conclusions (18 February 2020)*

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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the budget guidelines for 2021, adopted by the Council at its 3749th meeting held on 18 February 2020.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**  
**ON THE BUDGET GUIDELINES FOR 2021**

1. The Council underlines that the budgetary procedure for 2021 will be the first in the new programming period 2021-2027. In this regard, the budget will play an important role in the development and delivery of the Union's objectives and priorities.
2. The Council emphasises the need for all Union's institutions and bodies to respect and comply with all elements of the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) when establishing and implementing the budget for 2021.
3. The Council reiterates that the budget should be established in accordance with the budgetary principles set out in the Financial Regulation<sup>1</sup>, notably the principles of unity, annuality, sound financial management and transparency.
4. The Council considers that the budget for 2021 should be realistic, in line with actual needs, ensure prudent budgeting and leave, without prejudice to the provisions of the Interinstitutional Agreement<sup>2</sup>, sufficient margins under the ceilings of the MFF to deal with unforeseen circumstances. At the same time, the budget for 2021 should provide sufficient resources to ensure the implementation of the Union's programmes and to allow commitments already made under the current MFF to be paid in due time, if necessary and in duly justified cases, after implementing all possible reallocations within the budget, through the use of available flexibilities, in order to avoid any unpaid claims submitted by the Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1).

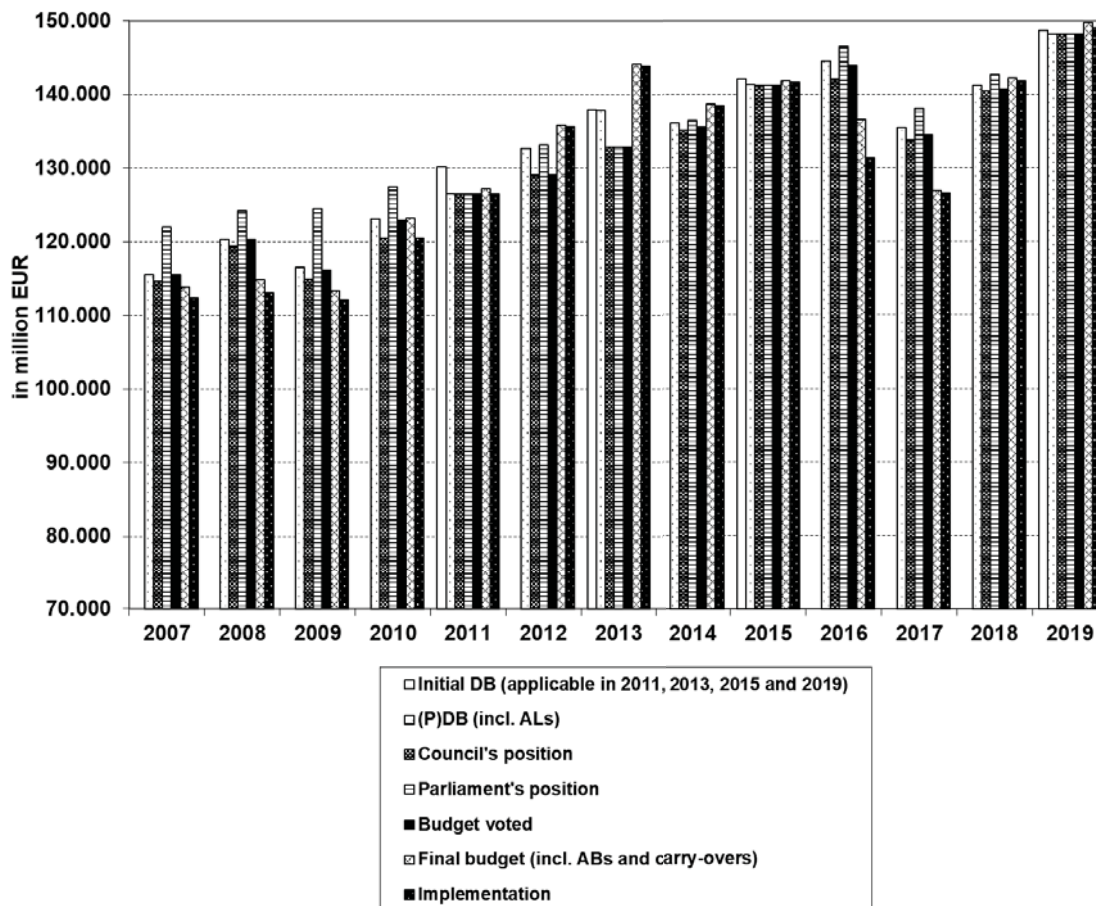
5. The Council underlines that budgetary discipline should be maintained at all levels, and stresses the need to finance all necessary expenditure through prioritisation and without compromising budgetary principles.
6. The Council stresses the need for predictability of both Member States' contributions to the Union's budget and payments from the EU budget to Member States, recalling that both over- and under-budgeting pose unwelcome challenges for national budgets. In this regard, the Council invites the Commission to provide in a transparent way reliable and accurate forecasts of all revenues, including the annual amount payable by the United Kingdom in 2021 in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement<sup>3</sup>, which will allow Member States to assess in a timely manner their expected contribution to the EU budget.
7. The Council underlines that corrective budgetary tools, such as amending budgets, should be kept to a justified minimum, introduced in a timely manner in order to avoid disruptions in the functioning of the Union programmes and financed primarily by redeployments. In particular, the Council invites the Commission to present revenue driven draft amending budgets separately and without delay after the relevant information becomes available. The Council reaffirms its strong commitment to take a position on draft amending budgets as soon as possible.
8. The Council considers that the level of staff of all institutions, bodies and agencies should reflect the MFF agreement and needs to be kept under continuous monitoring and control. In addition, the Council urges all Union's institutions, bodies and agencies to respect their establishment plans, and the financial envelopes and level of full-time equivalents (FTEs) for contractual agents. The Commission is encouraged to internally offset an adequate level of FTEs and corresponding appropriations when delegating tasks, previously performed by its own staff, to executive agencies or similar bodies when proposing a new or adapted mandate for them.

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<sup>3</sup> Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (OJ L 29, 31.1.2020, p. 7).

9. The Council calls on the Commission to present the draft budget for 2021 in due time, allowing the Council to undertake a detailed technical analysis and to prepare thoroughly its position. It also encourages the Commission to continuously improve the content of its budgetary documents by making them simpler, as well as more concise and transparent. In addition, the Council urges the Commission to accompany the draft budget with the full set of applicable documents listed in Article 41 of the Financial Regulation, including reports on progress in achieving the programme objectives.
10. The Council encourages all institutions to collaborate efficiently and constructively, allowing for a smooth budgetary procedure and the establishment of the budget for 2021 within the deadlines set by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). In particular, the Council invites the Commission to play its role as honest broker during the whole budgetary procedure. The Council calls on the Commission to ensure the timely access to draft elements for joint conclusions, containing all relevant information (in particular on commitments and payments) in order to facilitate the conciliation process. In addition, the Council underlines that the negotiations on the budget for 2021 should avoid addressing issues not directly linked to the annual budgetary procedure.
11. The Council reiterates the great importance it attaches to these guidelines and expects the Commission to duly take them into account in the preparation of the draft budget for 2021.
12. These guidelines will be forwarded to the European Parliament and the Commission, as well as to the other institutions.

### Evolution of payment appropriations (2007 - 2019)



**EVOLUTION OF PAYMENT APPROPRIATIONS (2007-2019)**

**(excluding assigned revenue)**

Budgetary procedure	Initial DB (applicable in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2019)	(P)DB	(P)DB (incl. ALs)	Council's position	Parliament's position	Budget voted	Final budget (incl. ABs and carry-overs)	Implementation	Final budget - implementation (figures)	Final budget - implementation (%)	Implementation (P)DB (incl. ALs)
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 (=4 - 5)</b>	<b>7 (=6/4)</b>	<b>8 (=5/2)</b>
2007		116.370	115.531	114.613	122.016	115.497	113.835	112.377	1.458	1,28%	97,27%
2008		121.533	120.347	119.410	124.196	120.347	114.835	113.070	1.765	1,54%	93,95%
2009		116.744	116.546	114.972	124.488	116.096	113.395	112.107	1.288	1,14%	96,19%
2010		122.316	123.061	120.521	127.526	122.937	123.203	120.490	2.713	2,20%	97,91%
2011	130.136	126.527	126.527	126.527	126.527	126.527	127.219	126.497	722	0,57%	99,98%
2012		132.739	132.668	129.088	133.139	129.088	135.842	135.602	240	0,18%	102,21%
2013	137.924	137.798	137.798	132.837	132.837	132.837	144.057	143.785	272	0,19%	104,34%
2014		136.066	136.061	135.005	136.444	135.505	138.577	138.440	137	0,10%	101,75%
2015	142.137	141.337	141.337	141.214	141.214	141.214	141.769	141.586	183	0,13%	100,18%
2016		143.541	144.456	142.120	146.459	143.885	136.517	131.400	5.117	3,75%	90,96%
2017		134.899	135.422	133.790	138.029	134.490	126.877	126.610	267	0,21%	93,49%
2018		141.406	141.240	140.431	142.663	140.666	142.215	141.780	436	0,31%	100,38%
2019	148.675	148.199	148.199	148.199	148.199	148.199	149.731	149.050	681	0,45%	100,57%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.719.476</b>	<b>1.719.193</b>	<b>1.698.726</b>	<b>1.743.738</b>	<b>1.707.288</b>	<b>1.708.071</b>	<b>1.692.793</b>	<b>15.278</b>	<b>0,89%</b>	<b>98,46%</b>

*Information on 2019 ABs, carry-overs and implementation is provisional*