

EU BUDGET REVIEW

Green 10: Sustainability - Our vision for a new EU budget

This document developed by the Green 10, a group of leading environmental NGOs active at EU level, frames their thoughts and contributions for the debate on the review of the EU budget, taking place 2008/9. The Green 10 invite other civil society groups to sign up to this vision.

We, the undersigned, welcome the invitation of European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso to have a “no taboo” debate on the EU Budget Review, and endorse his view that it represents a “once in a generation opportunity”.

We believe the EU Budget Review is a unique chance to match the EU’s spending to its priorities for tomorrow’s world. We call for a new EU budget that is delivering on a sustainable development policy for Europe and the world, responding to the new challenges of the 21st century.

A good budget is one that takes the EU into a secure future – putting resources into meeting Europe’s real and long-term needs.

We, the undersigned, define two over-riding principles for a new EU budget

1. Sustainability, in Europe and globally, with its economic, environmental and social dimension, must be the overarching and fundamental goal of a new EU budget.
2. Public money, for democratically-agreed policies, delivering public goods and services for society as a whole. EU funds must deliver clear and definable benefits for all EU citizens in an accountable and transparent way.

EU spending and revenue must support initiatives that implement social, economic and environmental sustainability within the European Union, and make a real contribution to sustainability in the world.

We believe that economic, environmental and social sustainability are indivisible in today’s world. One cannot be achieved without the others.

We say that economic competitiveness, human security, social justice, access to education and health, eradicating poverty, biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are not opposing concepts but parallel requirements for the future of our continent, and of the world.

We say that economic growth without social development and environmental protection, economic growth that leaves people marginalised, is a recipe for resentment and conflict: a time-bomb for future generations. Decent work and livelihoods are at the same time pre-requisites for, and dependent on, the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. Growing inequalities within Europe, and between richer and poor nations worldwide, pose a threat to sustainability.

We consider sustainability – economic, environmental and social – not only a necessity for human survival but also a moral obligation.

We consider the achievement of economic, environmental and social sustainability to be a global challenge – it cannot be achieved in Europe alone, or by the EU alone. There can be no

sustainability for Europe in an unsustainable global economy. Social, economic and environmental changes in other parts of the world have a direct impact on Europe, and vice versa. As one of the richest regions in the world, the EU and member states have a special responsibility.

We believe a new EU budget should have the following elements as its foundation stones

- An ambitious Sustainable Development Strategy, building on the agreement of 2001 – renewed in 2006 - which recognises the social, economic and environmental as inseparable and interdependent components of human progress and provides an overarching objective of EU policy and which includes the follow up of the post Lisbon Strategy for reform, the social agenda and more weight than previously to the international dimension.
- A climate policy that ensures that the EU is doing its utmost, domestically and globally, to keep global warming below the 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times;
- The Lisbon Treaty – with its Europe of rights and values; its commitment to social justice and protection, solidarity and security, democracy and transparency, environmental protection and sustainable development; its social market economy; its Charter of Fundamental Rights; its strengthened provisions for the EU to be a global player and its repeated commitment to sustainable development.
- The EU's key international commitments such as the UN Charter, the UN Millennium goals, the UN Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Biodiversity and the Aarhus Convention.

We underline that sustainability is the guiding principle for these future-oriented policies endorsed and adopted by the EU. The principle of sustainability, and the foundation stones named above, should be the basis of a new budget for the EU. Our ambition should be to implement these ambitious policies locally, regionally and globally and to shape the EU budget accordingly.

We believe that a “no taboo” debate, should be followed by “no taboo” decisions to transform the EU budget to reflect its true needs in tomorrow's world. Political courage and determination are needed to break from special interests and re-orientate the EU budget to meeting the long-term needs of all its citizens in a sustainable way.

For us it is a fact that today's EU budget reflects priorities established many decades ago. While there has been change in the budget over the years, this has not been enough. For instance, the biggest part of the current Common Agricultural Policy budget remains unsustainable in many ways and gives the wrong message to EU citizens, and the world, about the priorities of the EU.

At the same time there is little funding, and no clear place in the current budget, for this century's urgent global priorities, such as limiting climate change and preventing ecosystem breakdown with all it means for health, social rights, displacement of people, economic development, human and national security as well as protection of nature. In short, it is beyond dispute that the EU budget requires radical reform.

This is our vision for a new EU budget, a budget for the challenges of the 21st century, a budget for a world of global inter-dependence, for our children and grandchildren, for the women and men who will succeed us.

The Green 10 is a group of leading environmental NGOs active at EU level

- BirdLife International, European Division
- CEE Bankwatch Network
- Climate Action Network Europe
- European Environmental Bureau
- Health and Environment Alliance
- Friends of the Earth Europe
- Greenpeace European Unit
- International Friends of Nature
- European Federation for Transport & Environment
- WWF European Policy Office

For more information or if you are interested to sign up to this vision please contact:
Clairie.papazoglou@birdlife.org at BirdLife International, European Division.

The Green 10 have also contributed to the Civil Society Contact Group's submission on the EU Budget review consultation posted on:

[http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/EU Civil Society Contact Group contribution to the EU budget review consultation.pdf](http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/EU_Civil_Society_Contact_Group_contribution_to_the_EU_budget_review_consultation.pdf)