

Finance ministers still fail to focus on quality of spending

Title

The Council is under pressure to achieve partial agreements on the key EU policy reforms by the end of the Danish Presidency (June 30th). Furthermore, the meeting of the Heads of States on June 28 and 29 will be key to set the priorities for the EU Budget 2014-2020 in the context of tackling the economic crisis. So far, the discussion between finance Ministers has been disappointing: documents currently on the table completely miss any meaningful indication of concrete attempts to improve quality of spending, to link payments to the delivery of public goods or to the use of the new budget to address the crucial problems of saving biodiversity, halting climate change, and moving European economy toward a resource efficient and sustainable path.

At a time of critical economic challenges and fast rising unemployment, it is time to unlock the EU's potential to create millions of new jobs in green sectors such as renewable energy and energy savings, eco-innovation, nature conservation and sustainable transport. Investing the EU Budget in this way would support the EU's commitment to shift Europe into a sustainable and resilient economy, ensuring quality for every euro spent. However, this opportunity risks being wasted for lack of leadership.

The EU has also established targets for 2020, roadmaps for 2050 and committed to reach them. To ensure the realisation of these objectives, the EU must support further strengthening the LIFE programme, so that it can cover 15-20% of the costs of Natura 2000 ([more information](#)). It should also ensure that half of the Agricultural subsidies are dedicated to Rural Development (Pillar II) ensuring result oriented, sustainable and efficient spending of EU tax payer's money ([more information](#)). Furthermore, at least 20% of the Cohesion Policy funds should be concentrated to achieve climate mitigation objectives, while boosting economic sectors of the future. The General Affairs Council on the June 26 and 27 and the European Council June 28 and 29 will be crucial meetings to ensure Europe is headed towards a sustainable path. We urge decision makers to take these opportunities to propose stronger investments in green jobs and sustainability, in line with the EU's environmental and climate objectives, and the need to ensure that public money is spent for public goods. For more information, please contact [Bruna Campos](#), EU Financial Perspectives Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe



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