

Sealing the EU budget deal and slamming the door on environment

Title

On Friday 8 February, after months of discussions and a final 24 hour sprint session during the EU Summit, the 27 EU Heads of State, finally agreed on the EU budget for the period 2014-2020. The result is a blow to the environment. The outcome delivers a heavy blow to any hopes of greening the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and investments in Europe's sustainable future.

Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife Europe said "Exiting the financial crisis requires a refocusing of our economy on sustainability, not only in financial terms, but also socially and ecologically." In detail, rural development has been butchered since several EU Member States will be allowed to shift money away from environmental schemes to outdated farm subsidies. In the meanwhile, direct payments to farmers was abolished and Member States will be free to choose a fake greening option thus receiving money without delivering for the environment.

The part of the EU budget that includes the LIFE Programme – the only upfront investment in environment – is being reduced despite its already marginal budget allocation. Development aid was also reduced signalling the EU defaulting on its international obligations. Ariel Brunner said "Vested interests are now cashing in on the EU budget, while the vital needs of European citizens are ignored. Instead, Europe is offered a budget that scales back investment in the environment and caters for the usual fat cats that have been milking the system until now."

The last word is now with the European Parliament that will vote on the deal made by Heads of States. [The President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz \(S&D\)](#) and the four [Heads of the main groups in the European Parliament \(S&D, EPP, ALDE and the Greens/EFA\)](#) have already stated that they didn't approve this "austerity budget", which would lead to a "structural deficit". They stated "The outcome of the final budget will determine whether the second decade of the 21st Century will be remembered as the time of further integration for the benefit of all Europeans or the time of a standstill for Europe, or even falling behind in a globalised world." For more information please contact [Caroline Jacobsson](#), Head of Communications and Marketing at BirdLife Europe.
