Union Syndicale Bruxelles Commission

Revised MFF proposal – Next Generation EU without EU civil service?

Brussels, 09 June 2020

The Commission recently adopted the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework revised proposal, which includes a substantial budget increase in comparison with the 2018 proposal to help with the post-COVID crisis response and economic recovery.

The proposal differentiates between the long-term EU budget (EUR 1,1 trillion, in 2018 prices) and the European Recovery Fund named "Next Generation EU" (EUR 750 billion).

Next Generation EU is presented as a one-off temporary reinforcement aimed at boosting the long-term EU budget exclusively focused on crisis response and recovery measures and with an end date of 2024. These funds add to the 540 billion package agreed by the European Council in April.

Media across Europe have echoed a very positive reception of the Commission's proposal. **Union Syndicale fully supports the Commission's call for a quick political agreement** between the two arms of the budgetary authority, allowing a fast transition towards implementation. Now more than ever, time is of essence.

Yet, **Union Syndicale sees one serious reason for concern**.

Compared with the MFF proposal tabled by the Commission in 2018, the revised 2020 proposal increases the EU budget to a total of 1,85 trillion, up from 1,134 trillion. Paradoxically the **budget allocated to Heading 7 – European Public Administration - is reduced by 1 billion** to 74,6 billion in the 2020 proposal, down from 75,6 billion in the 2018 proposal. **Heading 7 stands now at 4% of the overall EU budget**, instead of the 6,7% that has been the norm in previous MFF.

There is no justification for this reduction. The possible arguments that the 2020 proposal long-term budget (i.e. excluding Next Generation EU) goes slightly down in comparison with that in the 2018 proposal (and it is to this reduced amount that the 6,7% applies), and that Next Generation EU is temporary, would be far too simplistic. Even if Next Generation EU funds were channelled rapidly to Member States, this represents a 750 billion budget increase for which the institutions, notably the Commission, will be responsible - before, during and after execution.

The staff of the Commission and other EU institutions are well aware of the need for all of us to pull our weight to get out of this crisis. Yet, **is it reasonable to assume that this budget increase and the implementation burden that goes with it can be safely handled while reducing personnel and other administration credits?**

Union Syndicale has not seen or heard a word of explanation from either DG HR or DG BUDG to explain this proposed 1 billion reduction and how institutions will cope with it in the face of increased programme and financial responsibility. **Union Syndicale** has only heard echoes of concerns among our HR colleagues and management regarding the fact that this is **a very severe reduction, which will require significant adjustments**. This begs the obvious question: **what will those adjustments be?**

Union Syndicale demands **full transparency in this matter,** warns the College of the **danger of overstretching human resources** and will **share its concerns with the budgetary authority** that now has the ball in its court.

The Executive committee
Union Syndicale Bruxelles

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