
EU budget priorities for 2026: resilience and preparedness

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- 2026 budget should bolster EU defence and security capabilities
 - Reinforce political and strategic autonomy, and social, economic and territorial cohesion
 - EU budget is crucial in ensuring stability for Europeans
 - It is the largest investment instrument complementing national budgets
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MEPs adopted their priorities for the 2026 EU budget on Wednesday, emphasising defence, prosperity and sustainability.

MEPs endorsed Parliament's guidelines for the 2026 EU budget by 441 votes in favour, 173 against, and with 70 abstentions, saying that next year's budget should focus on strategic preparedness and security, economic competitiveness and resilience, sustainability, climate, and the single market. They want to see additional investment in research, innovation, enterprises, health, energy, migration, border protection, digital and green transitions, job creation and opportunities for young people.

In the adopted text, MEPs call for improved EU security, cybersecurity and defence capabilities, and funding for dual-use transport infrastructure. They demand proper support for farmers and also stress the importance of implementing the Asylum and Migration Pact. The text states that the EU's economic resilience and sustainability depends on boosting public and private investment, increasing innovation, closing the skills gap and stepping up industrial production in Europe.

Health, Ukraine and debt repayment

Among other investment priorities, the guidelines call for continued support for health programmes and crisis preparedness, educational and cultural programmes to empower young people, and proper use of EU funds while upholding the rule of law.

MEPs also underline the need for sufficient resources given the sudden drop in international funding, and pledge unconditional and full support for Ukraine. They are concerned that repayment of the borrowing costs of the NextGenerationEU recovery plan must not lead to a reduction in EU programmes and funds.

Finally, while the 2026 budget has limited flexibility, as it is second to last in the 2021-2027 long-term EU budget, MEPs argue that, amid significant geopolitical changes and the worsening effects of climate change, the EU budget remains crucial in ensuring stability for Europeans, supporting established policies and providing for strategic priorities such as defence and security.

More details [in this press release](#).

Quote

“After tough negotiations between our political groups, we have produced well-balanced guidelines that respect the values and ideals of all the groups. Our compromise underlines key priorities, including defence, security, energy, competitiveness, agriculture, economic resilience, crisis response, health, democracy, and a stronger Union in a changing world. We have delivered a strong position, showing the Commission and the Council that Parliament is a serious player, fully prepared to defend the priorities of our citizens,” said rapporteur [Andrzej Halicki \(EPP, PL\)](#).

Next steps

The Commission is expected to present its proposal for next year’s budget in June 2025. Parliament’s negotiators will use the guidelines as the basis for their discussions with the Council and the Commission. The budget needs to be agreed between the Council and the Parliament by the end of this year.

Background

The annual budget lays down all the EU’s expenditure and revenue for one year within the limits fixed by its seven-year budget. The budget guidelines set out what Parliament expects the Commission to take into account when drawing up its budget proposal.

Further information

[The adopted text is available here \(2.4.2025.\)](#)

[Recording of the plenary debate \(31.3.2025.\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EP Think Tank: Parliament's guidelines for the 2026 EU budget: Section III – European Commission](#)

[Committee on Budget's webpage on the 2026 budgetary procedure](#)

[Committee on Budgets](#)

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