EU Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Dublin, Ireland on 8-10 November 2012

Notes

- that the negotiations on the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework are now underway, and that the European Council is due to find an agreement by the end of 2012;
- with concern that the Common Agricultural Policy, with substantial subsidies to the farm sector as its most dominant element, represents more than 40% of the current EU budget;
- further that more than 35% of the current EU budget consists of cohesion funds;
- that the Commission’s 2011 proposal lacks the necessary ambition in terms of setting the right priorities for a future-oriented budget, although we need to keep in mind the additional competences the Lisbon Treaty has conferred to the EU;
- the significant savings that could be made if the European Parliament was to have a Single Seat in Brussels;
- that the EU budgets in 2011 and 2012 have been deliberately under-funded by the Council, with severe consequences for the maintenance of EU programmes in education, R&D, employment, regional development, health, humanitarian aid and food aid.

Requests

- that the next MFF sets out the right priorities in order to support the structural adjustments that Member States embarked upon for enhancing their economic competitiveness;
- that the next MFF reflects the considerable fiscal consolidation efforts made by Member States in light of the economic crisis, in particular through the identification of efficiency savings and spending cuts with regard to administrative expenses, while giving the Union the means to fulfill the additional tasks that the Lisbon Treaty conferred to it;
- that the next MFF provides the EU with the capacity and flexibility it needs to meet its political objectives and to contribute towards the economic recovery of Europe.

Stresses

- the need for a budget providing true European added value by focusing on expenditure contributing to the long-term growth potential
and conditions for competitiveness and job creation, as well as tackling challenges in other fields where Union action is needed;

- the urgency of focusing the EU-budget on 21st century challenges, with an emphasis on funds for innovation and research in favour of cohesion and agricultural policy;

- that the need for austerity, also on the European level, is clear. This should lead to a more compact and growth-focused European budget and a smaller budget than the original Commission proposal;

- that this will require extensive reprioritization within the budget, shifting expenditure from CAP and Cohesion Policy towards more growth-oriented areas and measures providing European added value;

- the need to give priority to investment in strategic cross-border infrastructure, such as transport infrastructure, which is to the benefit of all Member States, and is vital in order to strengthen the single market;

- the need for additional funding for research, innovation and education in order to strengthen EU competitiveness in the global market, and that excellence must determine the allocation of research funding;

- the vital importance of Erasmus program in order to strengthen the sense of European identity among young people as well as the knowledge of European languages;

- the need for increased spending on measures that will strengthen Europe as a global actor, including enlargement, neighbourhood policy, development cooperation, ESDP and the development of the External Action Service;

- the need to add resources to tackle common challenges in the field of justice and home affairs, such as fighting cross-border crime, and the establishment of common asylum and migration policy;

- that substantial cuts and reforms in the CAP, including a stronger relative focus on rural development and biodiversity, as well as the phasing out of direct payments and market-disturbing measures, are needed to make the agricultural sector more competitive, environmentally sustainable and adapted to the market;

- the need for increased transparency in the EU budget and thus for all budget lines and funds to be included in the Multi-Annual Financial Framework.
Supports

- the Cohesion Policy as a key tool to strengthen cohesion in Europe, but believes that it must focus on less developed regions, in particular in the new Member States, that it must be brought in entirely in line with Europe 2020 and that substantial cuts need to be made in the funding to wealthier regions.

Calls on

- the European Parliament and the European Council to show courage in order to make the cuts and reprioritisations that are needed to adopt a future-oriented budget that can contribute to growth, jobs and European added value while ensuring the credibility of the EU;

- the European Union to set an example by reducing all the institutions overhead spending to the most efficient level and to enhance accountability of EU expenditure towards EU citizens through better communication about EU policy results.

Asks for

- an in-depth reform of EU resources to make the Union’s financing more transparent, simple and fair.