Kristalina Georgieva, Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources, on Draft EU Budget 2016

Brussels, 27 May 2015

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As it was announced, today we have adopted the Commission’s EU budget proposal for 2016. It is the third EU budget for the current programming period, but the first for the Juncker Commission.

This is money concentrated to address our key priorities: boosting investments, creating more jobs, and managing external challenges such as the conflicts in our neighbourhood and the issue of migration.

The proposal in numerical terms is for 153.5 billion euro in commitments and 143.5 billion euro in payments.

This is money for our people, this is money for our businesses, our local communities, for our farmers and for our researchers, for our students, for people who are in need of social protection.

Close to a half of the budget – more than 66 billion euros in payments – will go directly to generate investments, growth and jobs, and to support the broadening and the deepening of the internal market.

We continue our strive for more money invested in research and education, with an 11.6% increase in Horizon 2020. This brings the payments level there to 10 billion euros to 2016.

There is a jump of 30% in payments for Erasmus+ that brings it to 1.8 billion euro, this is to support students in exchange programmes and studies across Europe.

Very important for 2016 budget is that we are finally melting down the backlog of outstanding claims from the past budgetary period. These claims reached €24.7 billion euros in the end of 2014. In 2016, we will see them down to the sustainable level of 2 billion euros.

It is also a budget that addresses external challenges. There are 9.5 billion euros in payments, this is a 28% increase, to support the EU’s capacity to respond to external crises, such as Ukraine, Syria and Iraq – just to name a few – and to deliver on our commitments for investments in development.

We are responding to the growing issue of migration. We are proposing a 36% increase in payments for the Migration and Integration Fund that would bring this fund to 521 million euros in 2016. And we are also increasing by 15% the Internal Security Fund to 317 million euros in payments in that year.

And this and more is provided through a budget of responsibility, responsibility towards the needs of our economy, in this time of recovery, responsibility towards our taxpayers.

With an increase of 1.6% in payments, this is more or less no rise, no increase in the budget. We do more with what we have.

We are dealing with unfinished business, we are tackling the challenges of the present and investing in the future.

Now the budget is in the hands of the European Parliament, I just came back from a presentation to the budget committee, and of course in the hands of our Member States.

As in every other year, we the Commission will be the honest broker in the budget negotiations to try to find a constructive agreement. And I hope we will do that quicker than last year, so we don’t have to go down to the wire this time around. Thank you.

SPEECH/15/5060

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