Factual summary of the public consultation on the EU long-term budget in the area of strategic infrastructure

Introduction

The EU’s long-term budget currently runs until the end of 2020. In May and June 2018, the Commission adopted its proposals for the post-2020 long-term budget and the next generation of programmes and funds. These programmes/funds will provide support to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries such as regions, towns, NGOs, businesses, farmers, students, scientists, and many others, as well as ensure the functioning of concrete operations in plenty of areas like border management, humanitarian aid, the single market, to name a few.

The Commission’s proposals were designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the things that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. What should the priorities be for future policies and programmes/funds? And how can they be designed to best deliver results on the ground?

As an integral part of this process and following on from the Reflection Paper on the Future of EU Finances, the Commission has conducted a series of public consultations covering major spending areas to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget. The areas are:

- Investments, research and innovation, SMEs and Single Market
- Strategic infrastructure (transport, energy, digital, space)
- Cohesion
- Migration
- Security, defence and crisis/emergency response
- European values and mobility
- Natural resources
- External policy

See more on the main programmes under each policy area on the Commission website for the EU's long-term budget.

Replies to the public consultations fed into designing comprehensive proposals for the post-2020 EU long-term budget and for the next generation of financial programmes.

This document summarises the replies to the public consultation in the area of strategic infrastructure that was carried out from 10 January 2018 to 9 March 2018. More in-depth analysis of replies (including textual inputs) supported the impact assessments prepared for individual programmes.

Who replied to this public consultation?

In total, the public consultation on strategic infrastructure (transport, energy, digital, space) received 441 replies; 374 from organisations and 67 from individuals. Contributions were mainly provided by
organisations based in France (71), Belgium (70), Germany (38) and Spain (36), while the individuals that took part in the consultation are mainly Belgian (85), French (71), German (41) and Spanish (36) residents.

In terms of **type of organisations**, the majority are private enterprises (28.3%) followed by non-governmental organisations, platforms or networks (13.8%) and regional or local authorities (13.8%) (see figure 1 below for details on the types of organisations).

*Figure 1: distribution of the type of organisations participating in the public consultation*

![Pie chart showing distribution of organisational types](image)

Respondents were asked to indicate their experience with one or more funds or programmes (see Figure 2). Respondents seem to be most familiar with the "Connecting Europe facility programme for transport" (55.1%).
What are the views of respondents who replied to the public consultation?

**Importance of policy challenges**

The questionnaire preliminarily identified a number of policy challenges which programmes/funds under this policy area could address. Respondents were asked how important they considered these policy challenges to be.

The three **most important policy challenges** which the programmes/funds under this policy area could address are:

1. "Transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society" (91.6% of respondents consider it at least rather important)
2. "Transition towards clean, competitive and connected mobility" (91.4% of respondents consider it at least rather important)
3. "Completion of trans-European networks in the area of transport, energy and telecommunication" (89.8% of respondents consider it at least rather important)

"Long term sustainability of Europe’s space capability" is the challenge considered least important of the challenges identified by the Commission (44.9% of respondents consider it very or rather important) (see table 1 for more details). It should however be noted that only 7% of the respondents to the consultation stated having experience with the space programmes.

**Success of the current programmes/funds**

The questionnaire asked respondents to what extent they consider the previously mentioned policy challenges to be successfully addressed by the current programmes/funds.

"The completion of trans-European networks in the area of transport, energy and telecommunications" and "promoting economic growth and jobs across the EU" are the two challenges considered **most successfully met by the current programmes/funds**; 55.3% and 54.4% of respondents respectively consider them at least fairly well addressed. The challenge that is considered the least well addressed by the current programmes/funds (of those identified by the Commission) is "long term sustainability of Europe’s space capability". However, among those
respondents who have experience with the space programmes, 46 % consider the long term sustainability at least fairly well addressed.

Table 1 below combines the two previous questions: which challenge(s) respondents consider important and how successful the current programmes/funds are at addressing these challenges.

Table 1: Importance of policy challenges and how well current programmes/funds address them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Respondents considering the challenge important or rather important (%)</th>
<th>Respondents considering the challenge fully or fairly well addressed (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition towards clean, competitive and connected mobility</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of trans-European networks in the area of transport, energy and telecommunications</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting economic growth and jobs across the EU</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition of EU energy, ensuring security of supply</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of new long-term energy sources</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the Digital Single Market</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term sustainability of Europe’s space capability</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EU added value of the current programmes/funds

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they consider the current programmes/funds to add value compared to what Member States could achieve at a national, regional and/or local level.

76.4% of respondents believe that the programmes/funds do add value to a large or fairly large extent compared to what Member States could achieve on their own. Indeed, 165 respondents (37.4%) consider that current programmes/funds add value to a large extent and 172 respondents (39.0%) consider that they do so to a fairly large extent. 86 respondents (19.5%) consider that current programmes/funds add value to some extent only and 4 respondents (0.9%) consider them not to do so at all.

Obstacles preventing the current programmes/funds from being successful

The Commission preliminarily identified certain obstacles to the current programmes/funds. Respondents were asked to identify those that represent the biggest obstacles.

"Complex procedures leading to high administrative burden and delays" is the most important obstacle preventing current programmes/funds from successfully achieving their objectives with 68.5% of respondents considering this to be challenges to a large or fairly large extent (see details in figure 3 below).
Simplifying and reducing administrative burdens

In the questionnaire, the Commission preliminarily identified certain steps that could help further simplify and reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries under the current programmes/funds.

According to stakeholders, the **steps most likely to help further simplify and reduce administrative burdens** under current programmes/funds are "fewer, clearer, shorter rules" (78.9% of respondents considering this at least to a fairly large extent) (see figure 4 below for details).

**Figure 4: Extent to which the following steps would help further simplify or reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries under the current programmes/funds (%)**