

Reforming the Budget, Changing Europe

A Public Consultation Paper in view of the

2008/2009 Budget Review

This consultation takes place in the framework of the fundamental review of the EU budget, which the Commission was invited to undertake in the May 2006 Interinstitutional Agreement. The budget review is a unique opportunity for a thorough assessment of the EU budget and its financing, free from the constraints of a negotiation on a financial framework. It will take a long time horizon, to see how the budget can already be shaped to serve EU policies and to meet the challenges of the decades ahead. It will therefore not propose a new multi-annual financial framework for the period from 2014 – this task will be for the next Commission – nor the overall size and detailed breakdown of the EU budget. It will rather set out the structure and direction of the Union's future spending priorities, assessing what offers the best added value and most effective results. It will also examine how the budget works, how to get the right balance between continuity and responding to new challenges, and whether it should be managed differently. Finally, the review will take a fresh look at the best way of providing the resources necessary to fund EU policies.

This consultation is open to interested parties at local, regional and national levels, as well as at the European level. It will provide important input to the Commission's work on the review.

Submissions should be sent to the e-mail address budget-review@ec.europa.eu by **15 April 2008** at the latest. Where longer submissions are considered necessary, they should be accompanied by a summary. Submissions will be published on the website http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/index_en.htm unless the senders concerned have explicitly objected to the publication of their contribution. However, as a general rule, comments and contributions received from individuals will only be published on the Commission's website on an anonymous basis, leaving out the sender's name and contact data and specifying only the sender's country of residence. Individual contributors who want the Commission to publish their names and contact data on the website together with the contributions received must explicitly communicate this to the Commission when sending their contributions. The Commission will publish comments received on this website in the format in which they are received. These should therefore not contain confidential information.

The key messages and trends conveyed in the contributions will be presented at a large-scale conference to be organised after the end of the consultation period. They will also appear on the Commission's website on the budget review http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/index_en.htm.

Please answer all the questions on which you would like to express a view. Once all questions have been answered, please save the form and any additional text file using the name of your enterprise, association or administration as the filename and return it to the Commission to the e-mail address budget-review@ec.europa.eu.

Name and address of the organisation:	European Writers' Congress AISBL, Rue du Prince Royal 87, B-1050 Brussels Belgium
E-mail:	EWC-Secretariat@inter.nl.net
Type of organisation (e.g. governmental, trade union, professional body, NGO):	NGO AISBL (Association Internationale sans but lucratif)
Level of representation (European, national, regional or local):	European
Stated objectives of the organisation:	60 writers and translators associations in 30 countries of Europe. The federation champions the diversity of literatures, the need of creators to have their moral and economic rights respected; defends the professional interests of its members
Membership:	national and transnational associations of writers and or literary translators

1 How should policy objectives be properly reflected in spending priorities? What changes are needed?

Changing the Budget – Reforming Europe

The present statement welcomes the consultation and responds with a proposal to increase the EU budget for culture, which is currently placed at the lowest scale.

The European Identity is made up of culture: Shakespeare, Cervantes, Ibsen are “our“ writers, Beethoven, Verdi, Bartók “our” composers, no matter in which country of Europe we live. The European Commission’s President José Manuel Barroso said in 2004: “Europe is not only about markets, it is also about values and culture... In the hierarchy of values, the cultural ones range above the economic ones.” However, in the budget hierarchy culture ranks extremely low behind economy. Culture is still far away from the 1 % of the budget that the European Parliament thinks would be adequate. Programs such as “Culture 2007-2013”, the “Year of intercultural Dialogue,” the Capitals of Culture, to name just a few, are poorly financed in comparison to other fields of EU policies. For many years, creators have asked for an increase of the expenses for culture. In 2005 EFAH, together with the ECF (European Cultural Foundation), started a campaign under the heading “70 Cents for Culture”. They presented a calculation taking into account: the mobility of artists and cultural operators; greater cooperation within the EU and between EU and its neighbours; boosting the cultural dimension of EU foreign policy; platforms for public debate; support for networks; information and services for creators; and support for creative competitiveness. That rounded up to a need for 315 million Euro per year, which was the equivalent of 70 Euro cent per citizen per year. These needs are still valid.

In May 2007, the Commission published the Communication "A European agenda for culture in a globalising world" formulating high targets. Culture is attributed an important role in the “immaterial and knowledge-based” world, its “values such as human dignity, solidarity, tolerance, freedom of expression, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue” are emphasized, “values which, provided they are upheld and promoted, can be of inspiration for the world of tomorrow” [...] There is also acknowledgement that “culture is an indispensable feature to achieve the EU's strategic objectives of prosperity, solidarity and security, while ensuring a stronger presence on the international scene.”

The Commission names three main objectives for the “European agenda for culture”: cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue — the cultural industries — and culture as a vital element in international relations. It gives a number of details on how to achieve the objectives. It is obvious that for this purpose a greater part of the overall EU budget is needed.

Some additional ideas contributed by authors and translators:

International Centres for authors and literary translators such as those in Visby or Rhodos are meeting points for intercultural dialogue. They should be enlarged, be open to the public, and they could cooperate with schools or universities.

Similar to international scholarships for students (Erasmus), the EU should give scholarships to authors: to enlarge their views and enrich their creativity, and also to enrich their guest country through public readings and discussions. They could hold workshops with citizens of all ages and thereby further their interest in creative writing, in the appreciation of foreign literature, of translating.

International meetings of authors and festivals of literature (yearly or biennial such as the “Forum MARE NOSTRUM” or “Litterabaltica”; or singular events such as WALTIC (Sweden) or the World Book Capital Amsterdam) should be strengthened and enlarged. These festivals welcome authors from countries outside the EU. Contacts with these authors and their organizations help to export literary events in their respective countries. Literary connections with third countries are facilitated by the fact that in these countries EU languages are often second languages or even literary languages.

