

Organizer

An event organized by the EU-Umweltbüro in cooperation with Federal Ministry Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management Republic of Austria

Venue

Haus der Europäischen Union
Wipplinger Straße 35, 1010 Vienna
Eventhall, ground floor

Registration

Please register until 8.6.2026 [here](#).
Participation is free.

Target Audience

The event is aimed at interested persons from the environmental sector, politics, business, NGOs, authorities and science and will be **in English language without translation**.

Arrival & Reachability

We ask all participants for CO₂ neutral arrival by public transport: www.wienerlinien.at

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With support from:

 Federal Ministry
Agriculture and Forestry, Climate
and Environmental Protection,
Regions and Water Management
Republic of Austria



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INVITATION

WHO PAYS, WHO GAINS? The EU Budget 2028 – 2034

Green Transition, New Resources &
Environmental Accountability



MONDAY, 15TH JUNE 2026, 10.00 – 14.00
HAUS DER EUROPÄISCHEN UNION, VIENNA

Background & Objectives

The European Commission's proposal for the EU's next Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, represents the EU's most consequential budgetary decision in a generation.

The proposal introduces significant structural changes to how the proposed € 2 trillion of EU funds are organized and delivered, including a new 35 % climate and environment spending target, a shift towards National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs), and a consolidation of programmes across headings.

As the negotiations for the next MFF enter their final phase, this roundtable welcomes policymakers, climate and environmental experts, and civil society stakeholders to collect and discuss ideas on how to ensure climate and environmental objectives are effectively ensured and implemented in the next MFF.

The event consists of three sessions:

The first session will focus on the overall green budget architecture of the MFF 2028-2034, including the new 35 % climate and environment spending target and the European Competitiveness Fund, allowing participants to exchange views on how the EU budget can contribute to meeting the Union's climate and environmental objectives in the most effective way. This session will also discuss the risks of inaction within the EU and how to intertwine scientific data with environmental advocacy and investment.

The second session will discuss the state of the LIFE programme and the path toward a joint civil society contribution to the MFF negotiations. The session will consider what role LIFE should play in the new budget architecture and how its character as a directly managed programme can be preserved in the next MFF. Does it need a strong stand-alone budget line? Will it otherwise be 'lost in the crowd' and underfunded? The session will also focus on biodiversity earmarking, collecting ideas on how environmental safeguards can be strengthened and made more consistent across EU spending programmes.

The third session will feature a panel discussion examining how the new MFF architecture creates different outcomes for different actors and regions. The session will consider which types of projects and beneficiaries, including smaller civil society organisations and regions with lower administrative capacities, are best positioned to benefit from environment and climate funding including biodiversity-focused projects.

Agenda

10.00

Registration & Reception

10.20 (10 min)

Welcome

Opening remarks

Patrick Lobis, Head of Representation, European Commission in Austria
Bernhard Zlanabitnig, Director, EU-Umweltbüro

PART I: Framework Architecture: Green Budget Framework & Investment Gaps

10.30 (45 min)

Overview Budget Architecture

Review of the proposed MFF structure. How does the proposed € 2 trillion budget measure up to previous legislation?

- ▶ The National & Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)
- ▶ The European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)
- ▶ Horizontal objectives: climate and environment spending target of 35 %; performance tracking; DNSH principle

Michael Erhart, Director Central Financial Service at DG BUDG

Green aspects in the EU budget 2028-2034 (15 min)

Margit Schratzenstaller, Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO)

Accountability: Keeping Climate and Environment on Track (15 min)

- ▶ Why performance frameworks and expenditure tracking must go beyond ex-ante tagging of planned allocation.

Jeanet Benschop, Trinomics Consultancy

11.15 (10 min)

Moderated Discussion

Moderation:

Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler, Director
EU-Coordination Climate and Environment
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management (BMLUK)

Agenda

PART II: In-depth on Climate, Biodiversity, LIFE

11.35 (60 min)

Setting the scene (15 min)

- ▶ Environment and Climate Funding – mind the gap
*Jürgen Schneider, Director General, Environment and Climate
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental
Protection, Regions and Water Management (BMLUK)*

LIFE – Facts and figures (15 min)

- ▶ Overview of LIFE projects in the EU and Austria
Susanne Meissner-Dragosits, Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)

Present and Future of the LIFE Programme (15 min)

*Giulia Perez Almodovar, Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy
Security, Directorate General for European, International Affairs and
Sustainable Finance – Office for European Affairs Coordination*

The Biodiversity Earmarking Emergency (15 min)

- ▶ The 2021–2027 MFF had a 10 % dedicated biodiversity spending target.
What happens when the Commission's new proposal merges biodiversity
into the 35 % climate/environment block?
Till Eichler, Transport & Environment (T&E)

12.35 (10 min)

Moderated Discussion

Moderation:

*Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler, Director
EU-Coordination Climate and Environment
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental
Protection, Regions and Water Management (BMLUK)*

12.45 (15 min)

Coffee Break

Agenda

PART III: Who Wins, Who Loses? MFF Architecture and its Environmental Implications

13.00 (45 min)

Panel Discussion and Q&A

Green Gaps, Winners & Losers of the new MFF

- ▶ Does the MFF architecture prioritize competitiveness over nature protection?
- ▶ What are the Pros and Cons of the National and Regional Partnership Plans?
- ▶ How can the new MFF ensure sufficient funding for the environment and biodiversity to close the gap between realistic action and green goals?
- ▶ Which types of projects and organizations will benefit? Who is disadvantaged?
- ▶ What are the key environmental shortcomings and how can they be addressed?

Participants:

*Joschka Brangs, Policy Officer, WWF Österreich
Jürgen Schneider, Director General, Environment and Climate
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental
Protection, Regions and Water Management (BMLUK)
Michael Erhart, Director Central Financial Service at DG BUDG
Stefanie Pfahl, Deputy Director General for International and
European Policy, German Federal Ministry for the Environment,
Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN)
Elena Kmetova-Biro, LIFE WILDIsland Project Coordinator,
Donau-Auen National Park*

13.45 (5 min)

Summative Remarks

EU-Umweltbüro/Moderator/Haus der EU
Small Reception

13.50

Get-together & Fingerfood