

LIFE programme – Council adopts its position at first reading

Conservation efforts by the EU are reversing wildlife decline

Today the Council adopted its position at first reading on the LIFE programme for 2021-2027 paving the way for its final adoption. The final step will be the approval of the text by the European Parliament at second reading. The adoption of the Council's position follows a provisional agreement reached with the European Parliament in December 2020. LIFE is the EU's flagship programme for nature, biodiversity protection and the fight against climate change. From 2021, LIFE will also fund actions related to energy efficiency and renewable energy.



I'm pleased that we have stepped up our ambition for the LIFE programme. With an increased budget, LIFE will have a stronger impact on the ground, across Member States. It will be an important tool to help implement environmental and climate policy and reach the EU's climate neutrality objectives for 2050.

João Pedro Matos Fernandes, Portuguese Minister of Environment and Climate Action

The agreement reached with the European Parliament allocates a total financial envelope of €5.432 billion for LIFE for the period 2021-2027. This increase in budget reflects the agreement found under the EU's long term-budget (MFF) to apply an overall climate target of at least 30% to the total amount of expenditure from the EU's MFF and Next Generation EU recovery instrument. The co-legislators also agreed that the duration of the LIFE programme is aligned with the duration of the MFF.

Background

Launched in 1992, the LIFE programme is the only EU funding instrument entirely dedicated to environmental and climate objectives. The general objective of the LIFE programme for 2021-2027 is to contribute to the shift towards a clean, circular, energy efficient, climate neutral and climate resilient economy, including through the transition to clean energy, to protect and improve the quality of the environment and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. To date, LIFE has co-financed more than 5 000 projects.

The European Parliament adopted its negotiation mandate on the proposal for a regulation in December 2018. The Council reached a partial general approach also in December 2018. Negotiations between the co-legislators started in

January 2019 and led to a common understanding in March 2019, that excluded budget-related and horizontal issues linked to the multiannual financial framework (MFF). Following an agreement on the MFF, negotiations on the LIFE regulation resumed and the Council and European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on 17 December 2020, finalising those points. The next step is the formal approval of the provisional agreement by the European Parliament, before the Regulation can enter into force.