

EU at war: The member states REFUSING to pay Brussels more after Brexit

ONLY 14 EU member states have agreed to pay more into the union's vast budget as bloc officials attempt to recover the damage caused by the UK's decision to leave.

EU officials have been grappling with members to pay up in order to avoid financial ruin for the European project – with estimates of the financial loss to the budget varying from £12bn to £24.5bn.

Now European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has revealed only 14 of the 27 members of the bloc have agreed to increase their payments – forcing officials to consider cutting funding for ambitious projects as a result.

Alongside the loss of Britain's contributions, the EU are attempting to invest even more into border security and PESCO – the defence programme viewed by some as a pathway towards the creation of an EU army.

Mr Juncker said that “14-15 member countries are willing to increase their contribution to the European Union” for the financial period after 2020.

He added that “We will have to cut from the Agriculture and Cohesion funds because these two policies alone absorb 70% of our budget.

“Otherwise we would have to cut from other policies by 45 percent, and I do not think it is appropriate”.

The cuts are expected to amount to roughly 15 percent.

European Council chief Donald Tusk went on to claim that “finding an agreement this year seems difficult” while outlining the key budget focusses including schemes around “Immigration, defence, security and Erasmus+”.

Earlier this week Lithuania's head of state Dalia Grybauskaite warned that difficult decisions will have to be made after claiming one-fifth of the EU budget

will be lost when Britain leaves the bloc.

The shock figure is far greater than previous estimates, and adds to Jean-Claude Juncker's financial headache ahead of an expected row over how to deal with the financial shortcoming.

The Lithuanian leader did not reveal the exact figure, but the last EU budget came to 140bn euros a year, or one percent of economic output in the bloc.

A fifth of that figure would amount to a financial black hole of £24.5billion (€28bn), which is more than double the previous figure of the Brexit cost, mooted at £12bn.

Mrs Grybauskaite told reporters: "Negotiations on the budget currently are in their initial phase.

"EU member states will have to decide how to provide sufficient funding to ongoing programs and to future priority projects.

"Today we have a lot of challenges and we have the phenomena of Brexit, so that means the lack of payment after Brexit and the new promises is about 20%.

"That is a 20% lack of financial resources, so we have to decide, either finding new resources, new European taxes, or reducing old programmes.

"Obviously, there is a wish to finish the budget before the European Parliament's election in 2019.

"However, usually the accord is reached moments before the new financial long-term perspective comes into force."

(Additional reporting by Maria Ortega.)

Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/923586/EU-Brexit-budget-black-hole-member-states-cost-Britain>

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