



2015/2154(DEC)

17.2.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III - Commission and executive agencies
(2015/2154(DEC))

Rapporteur: Massimiliano Salini

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that in the 2014 budget, as finally adopted and amended during the course of the year, specifically for transport policies, a total of EUR 2 931 147 377 was included in commitment appropriations and EUR 1 089 127 380 was available in payment appropriations; notes further that of these amounts:
 - EUR 2 616 755 356 in commitment appropriations and EUR 937 182 847 in payment appropriations was available for transport policies, including the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), transport security and passengers rights, and transport agencies,
 - EUR 239 313 549 in commitment appropriations and EUR 71 213 206 in payment appropriations was available for research and innovation related to transport, including SESAR and the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (JU),
 - EUR 75 078 470 in commitment appropriations and EUR 80 731 327 in payment appropriations was available for administrative expenditure;
2. Welcomes the high implementation rate, in 2014, of 98,2 % for the commitment appropriations for mobility and transport policies, and the considerably high implementation rate of 95,2 % for payment appropriations; notes that the amount of outstanding commitments increased by EUR 1 653 372 424 in 2014 in relation to the overall amount of EUR 5 647 143 046 and that the increase in outstanding amounts is usually higher at the beginning of the new Multiannual Financial Framework as payments for new projects catch up later; calls on the Commission and the Member States, however, to ensure that transport projects are duly implemented;
3. Regrets that for the area of "Competitiveness for growth and employment", to which transport belongs and for which transport consists of the smallest amount audited by the Court of Auditors (0,8 billion euro) in relation to the total audited population (13 billion euro), the estimated level of error was 5,6 % in 2014 (higher than the equivalent results in 2013 (4,0 %)), caused mainly by the reimbursement of ineligible costs in research projects, but also by non-compliance with public procurement rules; calls on the Commission to take all appropriate measures to rectify this situation (including by carrying out more thorough *ex ante* checks in order to detect and correct errors before reimbursement);
4. Draws attention to the fact that in 2014 no projects were financed under the CEF since the first call for project proposals closed in March 2015 and that the CEF debt instrument to be managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) was not approved until the end of 2014; notes that in 2014 the Court of Auditors examined six transactions in the transport sector (DG Mobility and Transport) and found that two out of the six transactions were affected by quantifiable errors; is thus satisfied because of the decrease in the percentage of affected transactions in 2014 (33 %) compared to 2013 (62 %) and 2012 (49 %); calls on the Commission and other relevant actors to ensure compliance with public

procurement rules and costs eligibility of future transport projects;

5. Notes that according to the multiannual control strategy employed by the Commission, which takes into account recoveries, corrections and the effects of controls and audits over the period of implementation of the programme, the residual error rate for TEN-T was calculated at 0,84 %;
6. Draws attention to the large number of high quality projects that could not be adopted at the 2014 CEF-Transport calls owing to a lack of available funds; believes that it is necessary to ensure sufficient funding for CEF-T projects; regrets that the CEF budget was decreased by funding provided to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI); recalls however, that point 17 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline¹ provides for a 10 % flexibility to increase the CEF budget in the annual budgetary procedure and that this flexibility exists regardless of EFSI funding; insists that the implementation of projects agreed between the European Parliament and the Council in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council² would justify such an increase of the CEF budget;
7. Encourages the Commission to continue closely supervising the implementation of innovative financial instruments for leveraging Union investment and attracting new sources of funding for TEN-T infrastructure projects, such as the Marguerite Fund, Loans and Guarantees for debt (LGTT) and the Project Bond Initiative (PBI), and to ensure that the Union budget contribution to these instruments is managed and used appropriately;
8. Notes that information on transport and tourism projects is available in various databases, such as the Financial Transparency System, the INEA database of TEN-T projects, projects co-funded through cohesion and regional funds as well as CORDIS for Horizon 2020 projects; calls for the integration of project information from these tools in order to have a better overview, both upstream and downstream, of the process of allocating Union funds; reiterates the importance of publishing an easily accessible annual list of transport and tourism projects and having a searchable online database of projects co-financed by the Union setting out the exact amount of the funding in order to enhance transparency;
9. Points out that transport projects in 2014-2020 will be financed from several sources, including the CEF, the Cohesion Fund, the European Fund for Regional Development and the EFSI; calls on the Commission, therefore, to develop synergies that will enable these different sources of funding to allocate the funds available more efficiently;
10. Acknowledges that, as regards Union funds, the "use it or lose it" principle can induce Member States to propose low impact projects for selection; is concerned that in the past poor project selection led to some low value-for-money Union-funded transport investments; welcomes the new legal framework for 2014-2020 which strengthens the cost-benefit assessment and review process for projects;

¹ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013.

² Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010 (OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129).

11. Welcomes the fact that the Shift2Rail JU was established in June 2014 with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of the European rail industry; notes that separate discharge procedures on the Shift2Rail JU will be carried out, once it becomes financially autonomous in the forthcoming years; deploras, however, the delay in implementing this JU and the fact that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are finding it very difficult to gain access to it;
12. Takes the view that the Commission should ensure total transparency in the management of funds, ensuring that the public interest is protected and always, in all circumstances, takes precedent over any private interest;
13. Notes that in the 2014 budget, as finally adopted and amended during the course of the year, specifically for tourism, a total of EUR 11 226 160 was included in commitment appropriations and EUR 6 827 266 was available in payment appropriations; calls on the Commission to make an impact assessment of financed projects in order to better define future spending priorities which are in line with the Union as the number one world's tourist destination, and enabling the tourism sector as a key potential growth area for the Union economy; calls on the Commission to include the results of the pilot projects and preparatory actions in the next year's budget planning and to provide a readily accessible annual list of projects in this field;
14. Regrets, however, that appropriations for tourism are not yet adequate to support the development of the sector, also with a view to the new sharing economies;
15. Proposes that in relation to the sectors for which the Committee on Transport and Tourism is responsible, the Parliament grants to the Commission discharge in respect of the implementation of the Union general budget for the financial year 2014.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	16.2.2016
Result of final vote	+: 37 -: 8 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Lucy Anderson, Marie-Christine Arnautu, Inés Ayala Sender, Georges Bach, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Deirdre Clune, Michael Cramer, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Andor Deli, Karima Delli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Jacqueline Foster, Bruno Gollnisch, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Stelios Kouloglou, Merja Kyllönen, Bogusław Liberadzki, Peter Lundgren, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Georg Mayer, Gesine Meissner, Jens Nilsson, Markus Pieper, Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, Tomasz Piotr Por ba, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, Claudia Schmidt, Jill Seymour, Keith Taylor, Pavel Teli ka, István Ujhelyi, Peter van Dalen, Wim van de Camp, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Janusz Zemke, Kosma Złotowski, El bieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Dalton, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Olga Sehnalová
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Gabriel Mato