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REPORT

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(11706/2015 – C8-0274/2015 – 2015/2132(BUD))

Part 1: Motion for a resolution

Committee on Budgets

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016 (11706/2015 – C8-0274/2015 – 2015/2132(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,
- having regard to Council Decision 2007/436/EC, Euratom of 7 June 2007 on the system of the European Communities' own resources¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002²,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020³ (MFF Regulation),
- having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management⁴ (IIA),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2015 on general guidelines for the preparation of the budget, Section III - Commission⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 April 2015 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016⁶,
- having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, which the Commission adopted on 24 June 2015 (COM(2015)0300),
- having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, which the Council adopted on 4 September 2015 and forwarded to Parliament on 17 September 2015 (11706/2015 – C8-0274/2015),
- having regard to its resolution of 8 July 2015 on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2016 draft budget⁷,

¹ OJ L 163, 23.6.2007, p. 17.

² OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

³ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁴ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0061.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0172.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0263.

- having regard to the Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council of 23 September 2015 on managing the refugee crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures under the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2015)0490),
- having regard to Letters of amendment Nos 1/2016 (COM(2015)0317) and 2/2016 (COM(2015)0513) to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016,
- having regard to Rule 88 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets and the opinions of the other committees concerned (A8-0298/2015),

Section III

General overview

1. Stresses that Parliament's reading of the 2016 budget fully reflects the political priorities adopted by an overwhelming majority in its abovementioned resolutions of 11 March 2015 on general guidelines and of 8 July 2015 on a mandate for the trilogue; recalls that those consist in internal and external solidarity, in particular an effective tackling of the migration and refugee crisis, as well as in boosting competitiveness through the creation of decent and quality employment and the development of enterprises and entrepreneurship across the Union (the “three Es”);
2. Highlights that the Union is currently facing a number of serious emergencies, notably the unprecedented migration and refugee crisis; is convinced that the necessary financial resources need to be deployed in the Union budget, in order to match the political challenges and allow the Union to deliver and effectively respond to those crises, as a matter of utmost urgency and priority; understands that the migration and refugee crisis cannot be solved by financial resources alone and that a comprehensive approach is needed to address both its internal and external dimension; considers that extraordinary times require extraordinary measures and that a strong political commitment is needed to secure fresh appropriations for this purpose;
3. Notes that Parliament has, from the outset, placed a particular focus on migration and refugees in the 2016 budget; recalls its earlier statements that the handling of migration flows lies at the crossroads of internal and external solidarity and that external financing instruments should also be mobilised, in an integrated approach, in order to address the root causes of the problems the Union is faced with; recalls common treaties and agreements such as the Schengen Acquis and the Dublin Regulation and the Commission proposal on a binding crisis mechanism for relocation (COM(2015)0450);
4. Decides, therefore, to immediately put forward a comprehensive package of amendments increasing the Draft Budget (DB) by EUR 1 161 million both on Heading 3 (Security and Citizenship) and Heading 4 (Global Europe), in order to provide an initial response to the migration crisis; stresses that, as regards the internal dimension of this crisis, Parliament’s amendments already integrate fully and align the two packages on the relocation of asylum-seekers, while proposing additional increases for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Union agencies in this field; highlights, as regards the external dimension, a number of additional reinforcements targeting specific programmes in Heading 4, such as the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the Development Cooperation Instrument, Humanitarian Aid and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;
5. Underlines, however, that those amendments should be considered alongside the Commission’s Letter of Amendment 2/2016, which is expected to include, in addition to the second relocation package, the additional measures set out in the Commission communication of 23 September 2015; regrets that Parliament and the Council do not have more time to examine the suitability of this Letter of amendment, but understands the need for an immediate response and the considerable time pressure; stresses that the Parliament fully endorses these new measures and intends to defend their financing

through fresh appropriations even to a higher extent than the level proposed in its own position on the 2016 budget;

6. Decides to also take action with regard to the ongoing crisis affecting European farmers, notably in the dairy sector, and to already integrate in its position on the 2016 budget the EUR 500 million support emergency measures announced by the Commission; trusts that the Commission's Letter of Amendment 2/2016 will allow the exact budget lines that will be reinforced in this context to be determined; welcomes the decision by the Commission to carry over unused appropriations of the crisis reserve from the 2015 budget to the 2016 budget and notes that these unspent funds will be used for reimbursements to the beneficiaries of direct payments as provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013;
7. Acknowledges that a lot more effort needs to be undertaken to address the shortcomings in the Union economy by boosting competitiveness, growth and quality jobs; emphasises the key role played by micro, small, medium-sized and social enterprises in this regard; reinforces therefore the COSME programme by EUR 16,5 million; decides also to propose new commitments in 2016 for the continuation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), whose entire financial envelope was frontloaded in the years 2014-2015; acknowledges the significant contribution of this programme to the fight against unemployment and is determined to ensure that the necessary appropriations are made available in order to prevent a funding gap in its implementation; adopts, therefore, a EUR 473,2 million increase for 2016, corresponding to the original instalment that was foreseen for the YEI on a yearly basis;
8. Reiterates its conviction that the Union budget should not finance new initiatives to the detriment of existing Union programmes and policies and disregard political commitments already made; while acknowledging and fully confirming the large political and financial support to the launching of European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), intends to deliver on the commitment that it made during the EFSI negotiations, namely to minimise to the maximum the impact on Horizon 2020 and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in the frame of the annual budgetary procedure; proposes, therefore, to fully offset the cuts of these two programmes - due to the provisioning of the EFSI Guarantee Fund - in 2016 (EUR 1 326 million), in order to allow them to fully accomplish the objectives agreed only two years ago with the adoption of their respective legal bases;
9. Stresses the importance of fully respecting the joint statement on a payment plan 2015-2016 agreed between Parliament, Council and Commission, following the shared commitment to reduce the backlog of outstanding payment claims for the 2007-2013 cohesion programmes to around EUR 2 billion by the end of 2016; criticises, in this respect, that the Council's proposed cuts are in direct contradiction with this payment plan; stresses, moreover, the need to avoid any future build-up of such an unsustainable backlog, and calls on the Commission to come up with concrete proposals to that effect; considers, for this reason, that unforeseen payment needs should be financed with fresh appropriations and that the frontloading of EUR 1 billion in 2016 for Greece should, therefore, be financed through the available MFF payments' ceiling; stresses its long-standing position that payments deriving from commitments mobilised under the Flexibility Instrument are counted over and above that ceiling;

10. Restores all cuts proposed by Council to the DB (EUR 563,6 million in commitments and EUR 1 421,8 million in payments); fails to understand the reasoning behind the proposed cuts, for example those to Horizon 2020 and CEF, two programmes already affected by redeployments to EFSI, and to development and neighbourhood policies, especially in light of recent events; is concerned that, by proposing such important cuts to the DB, Council is largely disregarding the undeniable added value of the Union budget; contests, in any event, Council's declared intention to target budget lines with a low execution rate or absorption capacity, as this is not substantiated by the actual implementation figures and ignores the varying implementation patterns of certain programmes;
11. Concludes that, for the purpose of adequately financing these pressing needs, and considering the very tight MFF margins in 2016, all means available in the MFF Regulation in terms of flexibility, including the full mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument, will need to be deployed; expects that the Council will share this approach and that an agreement will easily be reached in conciliation, allowing the Union to rise to the occasion and effectively respond to the challenges ahead; stresses, in this respect, that the global MFF margin for commitments from 2015 should be mobilised as soon as the legal conditions are fulfilled; expects to reach a pre-agreement with the Council and the Commission on this issue;
12. Recalls the Joint Declaration of the three Union institutions, in the context of the MFF political agreement, that the annual budgetary procedures will integrate, as appropriate, gender-responsive elements; emphasises that gender mainstreaming should underpin, as a horizontal principle, Union policies and calls for a comprehensive implementation of gender budgeting; welcomes, moreover, the first steps of the greening of the Union budget; points to the need to further advance this process in order to meet the agreed targets in climate and environmentally friendly spending;
13. Sets the overall level of appropriations for 2016 at EUR 157 427,5 million and EUR 146 459,5 million in commitment and payment appropriations respectively;

Subheading 1a – Competitiveness for growth and jobs

14. Criticises that, again this year, Heading 1a is severely affected by the Council's cuts with a reduction of EUR 140,9 million in commitments and EUR 435,4 million in payments as compared to the DB; highlights that around half of these cuts are targeted at Horizon 2020, which results in a further reduction for this programme in 2016 after that part of its appropriations have been redeployed to EFSI;
15. Underlines that, for the sake of a coherent approach, several cuts applied by the Council on the ground of a low absorption capacity on many Heading 1a programmes in June 2015 have now to be reversed due the strong acceleration in these programmes' implementation in September 2015; notes that this is a general trend, in line with the life cycle of these programmes; decides therefore to restore the DB level on the lines cut by the Council both in commitments and in payments;
16. In line with its priorities for 2016, Employment, Enterprises, Entrepreneurship, and after careful assessment of their absorption capacity so far, decides to propose, in addition to the full compensation of the EFSI-related cuts for Horizon 2020, and CEF, some

selective increases above the level of the DB for COSME, Horizon 2020, EaSI and Erasmus+ programmes;

17. Stresses, in particular, that the frontloading of appropriations for COSME in 2014-2015 has proven to be truly beneficial given the constant increase in the SMEs' demand for support in access to markets and funding in the past few years; opposes, therefore, the decrease of COSME in the DB as compared to 2015 and decides to increase appropriations above the DB for this programme; recalls that the Commission has already pointed to a shortfall in the COSME financial instruments for 2015, 2016 and 2017, which demonstrates the gap between available commitments and expected demand; within COSME, asks for a substantial reinforcement of the appropriations for the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, given that the available resources are not sufficient to cover the substantial demand in participation;
18. Calls on the Commission to analyse the financial burden caused by fees and charges due within obligatory certification and licensing procedures; urges the Commission to provide a proper evaluation of the impact of those costs on the competitiveness of industrial companies and SMEs;
19. Decides to increase above the DB appropriations for the three supervisory agencies (EBA, EIOPA and ESMA) as well as for ACER to provide them with adequate resources to face their increasing tasks;
20. Confirms its support for the ITER programme and is committed to securing its appropriate financing; is concerned, however, about possible further delays and additional costs of this programme as well as the related potential repercussions on the Union budget; regrets, therefore, that it was unable to assess the level of the 2016 ITER appropriations against the updated payment plan and schedule, which is only due to be presented in the ITER Council in November 2015; expects, however, that this revised plan will provide sufficient evidence that Parliament's recommendations, as set out in the relevant 2013 discharge resolution¹, have been properly taken into account and that financial soundness and spending efficiency will be ensured; intends to raise this matter in the 2016 budgetary conciliation; moreover, insists on the need for full transparency regarding the use of Fusion for Energy's contributions to the ITER programme; calls for a proper accountability mechanism giving a clear overview of the amount of financial resources provided to the international project and evaluating their efficient use;
21. Reserves part of the appropriations for the standardisation of financial reporting and auditing and calls for the implementation of the recommendations of the Maystadt report referring to the task and responsibilities of the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG), thereby also strengthening the Union's influence in international accounting standard-setting;
22. As a result, increases the level of commitment and payments appropriations for Heading 1a above the DB by EUR 1 405,5 million and EUR 491,5 million respectively (including pilot projects and preparatory actions), thus exceeding the ceiling for

¹ European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy for the financial year 2013 (Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0168).

commitments by EUR 1 316,9 million, to be financed by all means available as regards flexibility in the MFF Regulation after exhaustion of the available margins;

Subheading 1b – Economic, social and territorial cohesion

23. Disapproves of Council's proposed cuts of EUR 3,1 million in commitments and, more importantly, EUR 220,1 million in payments under subheading 1b, including on completion lines; calls on the Council to explain how these cuts are compatible with the objective, on the one hand, of reducing the backlog of unpaid bills and, on the other hand, of avoiding negative repercussions and unnecessary delays for the implementation of the 2014-2020 programmes; recalls that cohesion policy represents the Union's main investment policy aimed at reducing disparities between European regions by strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion; underlines that instruments such as the ESF, the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund or the Youth Employment Initiative are instrumental in fostering convergence, narrowing the development gap and supporting the creation of quality and sustainable jobs;
24. Notes the Commission's preliminary assessment, based on Member States' latest forecasts, that programme implementation in the area of cohesion policy is likely to be delayed in 2016; is alarmed that any significant underspending in the third year of implementation of the new European Structural and Investment Funds cycle, at a time when programmes should be reaching full swing, will not only have a detrimental effect on the timely achievement of results on the ground, but may also lead to serious pressure on payments in subsequent years, possibly reconstituting a backlog of unpaid bills; urges the Member States concerned to make speedy progress in tackling the underlying causes of these delays in implementation, such as through the prompt designation of programme authorities and the non-multiplication and simplification of national administrative procedures; in line with the payment plan, requests the Commission to closely monitor the evolution of payments under Heading 1b related to the 2014-2020 programming period, including through detailed, regularly updated forecasts to be discussed at dedicated interinstitutional meetings, and make appropriate proposals as needed;
25. Recalls that the Commission has not proposed any commitment appropriations for the Youth Employment Initiative in 2016 as a result of its frontloading in the years 2014-2015; decides, in line with the Regulation on the European Social Fund¹ which foresees the possibility of such a continuation, to provide the Youth Employment Initiative with EUR 473,2 million in commitment appropriations, namely an amount corresponding to the initial annual instalment foreseen for this programme; is convinced that funding for this important programme, which addresses one of the Union's most pressing challenges, should not stop in 2015; underlines that the additional funding should be used to scale up the programme, thus assisting a greater number of young people in their search for a decent and permanent job; urges the Member States to do their utmost to speed up the implementation of the Initiative on the ground, for the direct benefit of young Europeans; urges the Commission to report to Parliament on Union funded measures to combat youth unemployment and on the results achieved with those measures;

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 470).

26. Taking account of pilot projects and preparatory actions, increases commitment appropriations for Heading 1b by EUR 482,7 million and payment appropriations by EUR 1 164 million above the DB, thus exceeding the ceiling for commitments by EUR 467,3 million to be financed by any means available as regards flexibility in the MFF Regulation;

Heading 2 – Sustainable growth: natural resources

27. Notes that the Council reduced appropriations also in Heading 2 by EUR 199,9 million in commitments and EUR 251,1 million in payments, including rural development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the LIFE programme; considers that the Amending Letter on agriculture should remain the basis for any reliable revision of EAGF appropriations; restores the DB levels accordingly;
28. Welcomes the presentation by the Commission of a EUR 500 million comprehensive package of emergency measures to support European farmers, notably in the dairy sector amid falling commodity prices and greater milk production; stresses that the effects are most severe in remote areas where the socio-economic importance of the dairy sector is unquestionable; incorporates this amount in its reading as a show of support for the Commission's announcement, and looks forward to its full inclusion in the course of the conciliation procedure on the basis of the Amending Letter; underlines that this package should add up to the range of measures aimed at addressing the losses and long-term effects on European farmers of the Russian embargo on agricultural products, Russia being thus far the second most important destination for Union agricultural exports;
29. Stresses the increasing tasks assigned to the Union as part of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund; therefore restores the level of appropriations of the 2015 budget for scientific advice and knowledge in fisheries due to the importance of data collection in decision-making, and reinforces the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) budget to support its role in coordinating and implementing the Common Fisheries Policy;
30. Increases therefore commitment appropriations by EUR 510,6 million and payment appropriations by EUR 520,7 million (including pilot projects and preparatory actions), leaving a margin of EUR 647 million below the ceiling for commitments in Heading 2;

Heading 3 – Security and Citizenship

31. Recalls that the DB provided for reinforcements in the area of security and migration, including a EUR 150 million scheme for the relocation of 40 000 persons in need of international protection, leading the Commission to exceed the ceiling for this heading by EUR 124 million and to propose the corresponding mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument; welcomes the fact that the Council has agreed to the principle of mobilising the Flexibility Instrument for this purpose; notes however that a long-term financial plan to respond to the refugee crisis is needed and considers that this shall also be addressed through the revision of the MFF;
32. Decides, in light of the current, exceptional flows of migrants and refugees to concentrate its reinforcements on strengthening the AMIF; strongly supports in this context the second EUR 780 million package on the relocation of additional 120 000

persons; decides to incorporate the necessary funds in its reading, and to align the first relocation package with the second one by adding EUR 20 million to finance transport costs (EUR 500 per migrant to Italy and Greece); approves an additional increase of EUR 79 million for general reinforcements of the AMIF; highlights the necessity of also ensuring sufficient financing possibilities for AMIF for the upcoming years; recalls that point 17 of IIA of 2 December 2013 allows for an increase of more than 10 % in the amount foreseen for the entire duration of a programme when the new, objective, long-term circumstances arise;

33. Notes that such measures are only a first step towards the full implementation of the principle of solidarity on which the Union is based on; calls on the Commission and the Council to fully implement the plans proposed on 23 September 2015 and show a clear commitment to the respect for human rights, as stated in Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; stresses the importance of proper financing of return operations in accordance with the Charter and the principle of 'non-refoulement' in order to achieve an effective return policy, preventing and reducing irregular migration; underlines the importance of supporting refugees close to their home countries and of facilitating asylum procedures in Member States;
34. Finally decides to reinforce the agencies with migration-related tasks for a total of EUR 26 million with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) receiving the biggest increase of EUR 12 million above the DB; recalls that this agency plays a central, coordinating role in the implementation of the provisional measures in the area of international protection and is increasingly being called upon to assist concerned Member States;
35. Welcomes the Commission communication of 23 September 2015 and the corresponding measures reflected in the Letter of Amendment 2/2016, notably EUR 600 million of additional emergency funding for the most affected Member States; is satisfied that the Commission is taking leadership in that area and, in doing so, confirms the approach taken by Parliament in its reading; stands ready to consider further reinforcements in the course of the conciliation;
36. Deplores that the Council decreases commitment appropriations by EUR 25,1 million and payment appropriations by EUR 33,6 million compared to the DB; believes that these reductions jeopardise the proper implementation of programmes and actions under Heading 3; recalls in this context that though some of the proposed cuts may seem minor, one needs to keep in mind the relatively small size of several important and valuable programmes, making them particularly vulnerable to cuts; decides therefore to restore the level of the DB;
37. Furthermore, deems it necessary, given their important role in supporting cultural and creative industries that represent key European values, to increase by a total of EUR 10,5 million in commitment appropriations above the DB the culture and media sub-programmes, including the Multimedia Actions, and the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCSGF) planned for 2016 and intended to tackle the critical issue of access to finance for SMEs and organisations in the cultural and creative sectors;

38. Considers it also a priority to reinforce the Europe for Citizens' programme with EUR 1,5 million as well as modifying the budget nomenclature of the Europe for Citizens programme by dedicating a separate line to the implementation of the ECI;
39. Notes that its reading (including pilot projects and preparatory actions) exceeds the ceiling of Heading 3 by EUR 1 055,1 million in commitments, with EUR 931,1 million above the DB, while increasing payment appropriations by EUR 586,5 million; proposes therefore to mobilise any means available in the MFF to finance the package of reinforcements linked to migration;

Heading 4 – Global Europe

40. Points to the fact that, of all headings, Heading 4 bears the biggest cuts by the Council both in commitments (- EUR 163,4 million) and in payments (- EUR 450,4 million); notes with surprise that the European Neighbourhood Instrument (notably poverty and security in the Mediterranean countries), the Development Cooperation Instrument (including the migration and asylum thematic objective) and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (despite candidate countries hosting a considerable number of refugees or being located on major migration routes) are among the most affected; underlines that this approach is in blatant contradiction to the statements of the Council and the European Council on the migration agenda, on the refugee crisis and on cooperation with countries of origin and transit;
41. Against this background, decides to restore the level of appropriations provided for by the DB; notes that the payment situation of Heading 4 is still a matter of particular concern due to the rolling-over of a significant backlog of unpaid bills and the artificial postponing of contractual commitments to face a persistent underbudgeting in payments; reaffirms, therefore, that the increases in payment appropriations proposed by the Commission were merely necessary, notwithstanding the fact that the unprecedented migration and refugee crisis has meanwhile imposed additional challenges for the Union's external action;
42. Complements the package of amendments on migration and the refugee crisis by adopting targeted reinforcements in commitment appropriations first and foremost within the European Neighbourhood Instrument (+ EUR 178,1 million) but also in the Development Cooperation Instrument (+ EUR 26,6 million), Humanitarian aid (+ EUR 26 million), the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (+ EUR 11,2 million), the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (+ EUR 12,6 million) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (+ EUR 1 million); while supporting, where necessary, reprioritisation within those programmes to address the most topical challenges, stresses that this must not lead to reduced efforts related to the initial objectives of the respective legal basis, thus risking the destabilisation of the European neighbourhood or other regions concerned; reiterates the need to adopt a comprehensive and human rights-based approach linking migration with development and working towards the integration of legal migrants, asylum seekers and refugees; emphasises the need to reinforce cooperation and commitment with countries of origin and transit to effectively tackle the current migration crisis, and in particular the needs of displaced persons in third countries in fields of health and education; considers, therefore, such

reinforcements indispensable to the financing of additional initiatives, on top of the initial objectives of the respective legal bases;

43. Notes that the Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis and the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa were created because the Union budget lacks both the necessary flexibility and funding to allow for a rapid and comprehensive response to the crisis; stresses that a more holistic solution needs to be found in the MFF review/revision on how to make support from the Union budget for humanitarian assistance and development more effective and more readily available and how to successfully merge it with the European Development Fund and bilateral aid offered by Member States; calls for the extra appropriations for the programmes under Heading 4 to be used in particular to increase the funding for the two Trust Funds as well as for immediate assistance via the UNHCR and the World Food Programme; calls on the individual Member States to turn words into deeds and bring the necessary additional contributions to match the Union funding linked to the Trust Funds and to close the funding gap of the UN agencies without further delay; notes that the pipeline of projects potentially funded by the Trust Funds further weakens the Council's case for an alleged lack of absorption capacity in Heading 4;
44. Reinforces by EUR 40 million the budget line for support for the peace process and financial assistance to Palestine and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); notes that UNRWA plays an effective role in supporting the growing number of Palestinian refugees suffering directly from the Syrian crisis, which poses an additional burden on the agency; is concerned about the funding gaps faced by UNRWA and calls for those additional appropriations to be channelled to its General Fund in support of basic education, social and health services;
45. Recalls that in order to alleviate damaging long term effects that stem from humanitarian crisis it is essential to ensure that children affected continue to receive an education; therefore increases funding for supporting education in the Humanitarian aid budget so that it accounts for 3 % instead of 1 %, with the aim of reaching a threshold of 4 % by 2019;
46. Approves a symbolic reinforcement of the CFSP budget to support any initiative aimed at making migration a specific component of CSDP civilian missions, while giving full support to the EUNAVFOR Med military mission aimed at fighting human smugglers and traffickers;
47. Appreciates the ongoing reflection process taking place in the EEAS on the future of EU Special Representatives and their relationship with the EEAS; considers that any change to the budget line for EU Special Representatives should only take place after the current reflection process is concluded;
48. Deems it necessary to increase appropriations for the Turkish Cypriot Community budget line (+EUR 2 million) for the purpose of contributing decisively to the continuation and intensification of the mission of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and of supporting the bicomunal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, thus promoting trust and reconciliation between the two communities;

49. Emphasises that the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement reached at the 9th Ministerial Conference of the WTO will require increased funding support for the least developed and developing countries; stresses the need for coordinated efforts between the Commission and the Member States with regard to international financial institutions in order to avoid reduced appropriations for Aid for Trade and multilateral initiatives as well as irregularities in relation to cooperation with certain partners leading to reduced spending effectiveness, and to ensure the Trade Facilitation Agreement works for development;
50. Decides, together with pilot projects and preparatory actions, to exhaust the margin of EUR 261,3 million left by the DB below the ceiling for Heading 4 in commitments and not to go any further at this stage; increases also payment appropriations by EUR 132,5 million; looks forward to a fruitful conciliation on the basis of these amendments, also taking the Letter of Amendment 2/2016 into account; stresses, however, that this ceiling might be insufficient given that it has been set well before major developments in Ukraine, Syria, Tunisia and more generally throughout the neighbouring countries, the Middle East and Africa; calls, therefore, for a full use of the potential of the Emergency Aid Reserve and remains open to any further mobilisation of the flexibility provisions foreseen in the MFF for addressing the external dimension of the migration and refugee crisis;

Heading 5 - Administration; Other headings - administrative and research support expenditure

51. Notes that Council cuts in this heading amount to EUR 31,2 million, of which EUR 19,3 million concerns the Commission's administrative budget notably for its buildings, equipment, and above all for its staff as a consequence of increasing the standard flat rate abatement to 4,3 %; does not see any justification for Council's reading and recalls that, following constant restraint these past years, Commission's proposed administrative expenditure for 2016 was kept close to the expected level of inflation i.e. stable in real terms and that Commission implements a continued reduction of its staff;
52. Considers moreover these cuts arbitrary in view of the foreseeability of this type of expenditure largely based on contractual obligations, and in view of its very high implementation as reported by the Commission; notes in particular that the occupation of the Commission establishment plan reached a record high on 1 April 2015 with 97,8 % posts actually occupied; regrets that in addition, in headings other than Heading 5, Council cut the administrative and research support expenses by a total of EUR 28 million, despite these being key to ensuring success of the programmes in the different Union policy areas;
53. Decides consequently to restore the DB on all the lines of administrative and research support expenditure in policy areas and on all the lines in Heading 5 decreased by the Council, as well as to approve a limited number of small reinforcements;
54. Asks the Commission to ensure that the combined budget of the OLAF Supervisory Committee and its Secretariat is specified in a separate line of the OLAF budget for 2016;

Agencies

55. Endorses, as a general rule, the Commission's estimates of the budgetary needs of agencies; notes that the Commission has already considerably reduced the initial requests of most agencies;
56. Considers, therefore, that any further cuts proposed by the Council could endanger the proper functioning of the agencies and would not allow them to fulfil the tasks they have been assigned by the legislative authority;
57. Decides to increase, within the overall package on migration, the appropriations for the main agencies working in this field: the European Asylum Support Office, Frontex, Europol, Eurojust, eu.LISA, Cepol and the Fundamental Rights Agency for a total of EUR 26 million, as these agencies are vital to address the current pressing problem of migratory flows in an effective manner; welcomes the additional appropriations and additional 120 establishment plan posts for agencies in Draft Amending Budget No 7/2015 and expects this decision to also impact the 2016 budget as well as the budgets for the following years; highlights the quickly deteriorating crisis situation and huge increase in migratory flows; urges the Commission to provide updated and consolidated information about the agencies' needs before budgetary conciliation; calls on the Commission to propose a medium-term and long-term strategy for the justice and home affairs agencies' actions: objectives, missions, coordination, development of hot spots and financial resources;
58. Decides furthermore to increase the 2016 budget appropriations for the three financial supervisory agencies due to their additional tasks and increased workload; invites the Commission to submit by 2017 a proposal for a fee-based financing concept replacing completely the current contributions from member states, as a means of securing the European authorities' independence from their national member authorities;
59. Decides to also increase the appropriations for the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators, the European Fisheries Control Agency and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, in order to better match the available resources with the agencies' tasks;
60. Cannot accept, however, the Commission's and the Council's approach to agencies' staffing, and therefore modifies a substantial number of establishment plans; underlines once more that each agency should cut 5 % of posts over 5 years as agreed in the IIA, but that new posts that are needed to fulfil additional tasks due to new policy developments and new legislation since 2013 have to be accompanied by additional resources and need to be counted outside the IIA staff reduction target;
61. Emphasises therefore again its opposition to the concept of a redeployment pool amongst agencies, but reaffirms its openness to free posts by means of achieving efficiency gains between agencies through increased administrative cooperation or even analyse the possibilities of mergers where appropriate and through pooling certain functions with either the Commission or another agency;
62. Underlines once more that posts financed from industry have no impact on the Union budget and therefore should not be subject to any staff reduction; emphasises that it should be left to the discretion of the agency concerned to balance fluctuating workload by not filling all posts at their disposal;

63. Modifies therefore a number of establishment plans of agencies in line with the priorities described above to align staffing with additional tasks, modifies others to bring them more in line with a real 5 % cut over 5 years and to treat fee-financed posts differently; recalls that the 5 % cut over 5 years was introduced in order to decrease the costs of the administration; highlights in this context that additional posts in the establishment plan do not have an automatic financial impact on the Union budget since agencies fill their posts according to their needs and agencies therefore do not always have all posts in their establishment plans filled;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

64. Having carried out a careful analysis of the pilot projects and preparatory actions submitted – as regards the rate of success of the on-going ones and excluding initiatives already covered by existing legal bases, and taking fully into account the Commission's assessment of the projects' implementability, decides to adopt a compromise package made up of a limited number of PP-PAs, also in view of the limited margins available;

Payments

65. Stresses once again the importance of the joint payment plan 2015-2016 agreed, ahead of the budgetary procedure, by Parliament, the Council and the Commission, which reflects the commitment of the three institutions to reduce the backlog of outstanding payments; notes that the three institutions agreed to cooperate fully in view of authorising a level of payment appropriations in the 2016 budget which allows reaching such a goal, and that payment appropriations requested for 2016 were calculated by the Commission accordingly; considers that any action to manage the risk of an unsustainable backlog should be complemented by efforts to ensure a more productive exchange of opinions and improve the cooperative spirit between the Council on the one hand and Parliament and Commission on the other hand; recalls that, according to Article 310 TFEU, the revenue and expenditure shown in the Union budget shall be in balance;
66. Deplores that, despite the resulting moderate increases and comfortable margins proposed by the Commission, the Council decided to cut down payment appropriations by EUR 1,4 billion, targeting both completion lines and programmes reaching full swing, thus jeopardising the phasing out of the abnormal backlog; recalls that, for programmes under direct management, shortages of payment appropriations are not only reflected in the evolution of the backlog but also in artificial delays in the implementation of programmes, for example delaying calls for proposals and/or the signature of new contracts;
67. Decides to restore the DB in payments on all lines cut by the Council, on the assumption that the payment levels proposed by the Commission in its DB are the ones needed to achieve the objectives of the payment plan;
68. Reinforces, by an appropriate ratio, payment appropriations on all those lines which are amended in commitment appropriations, taking into account areas with a fast disbursement profile or a high degree of urgency namely Erasmus+, the two relocation schemes, UNRWA and humanitarian aid; increases payment appropriations by a further EUR 1 billion to fully cover by fresh appropriations the frontloading of payments for

Greece; also decides, in view of past implementation, to increase payments for the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund;

Other sections

Section I – European Parliament

69. Recalls that the Parliament's estimates for 2016 were set at EUR 1 823 648 600, which corresponds to a 1,6% increase over the 2015 budget; recalls, in addition, that EUR 15 million has been earmarked for urgent investments in security and cybersecurity, setting the overall level of its 2016 budget at EUR 1 838 648 600;
70. Points out that as of 15 June 2015, after the Parliament's estimates for 2016 were adopted, a new political group has been created and that, due to these changes in the organisation of the Parliament, supplementary appropriations are needed to ensure that all political groups are treated equally;
71. Fully compensates these reinforcements by reducing the appropriations in the budget lines for contingency reserve, the general Members' allowance, further training, fitting out of premises, energy consumption, computing and telecommunications - investment in projects and furniture;
72. Notes the Bureau conclusions of 7 September 2015 in view of the parliamentary reading on the 2016 budget, which proposes to transpose its recent decisions and technical adjustments into the budget; approves these limited technical changes proposed by the Bureau, which involve budget-neutral adjustments to appropriations and to the establishment plan, and updates to certain aspects of the budgetary nomenclature;
73. Maintains therefore unchanged the overall level of its budget for 2016, as adopted by the plenary on 29 April 2015, at EUR 1 838 648 600;
74. Underlines that the activities of the political groups do not correspond to administrative work; confirms that, for this reason, the total level of staff in political groups shall be exempted from the 5 % staff reduction target in line with the decisions taken by it in respect of the financial years 2014¹, 2015² and the estimates for 2016³;
75. Recalls that political groups have had a recruitment freeze in place since 2012 and that their needs were only partially covered in the preceding budgetary years;
76. Reiterates its commitment to implement point 27 of the IIA and to reduce its staff by 1 %;

¹ European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2013 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 (Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0437).

² European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2014 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015 on (Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0036).

³ European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016 (Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0172).

77. Stresses that Parliament and the Council must address the need for a roadmap to a single seat, as requested by a large majority in this Parliament in several resolutions, in order to create long term savings in the Union budget;

Changes to the establishment plan

78. Reduces the establishment plan of its General Secretariat for 2016 by 57 posts (1% staff reduction target) as follows: 4 AD14, 13 AD13, 2 AD12, 1 AD9, 2 AD8, 1 AD5, 2 AST11, 1 AST10, 3 AST9, 8 AST8, 7 AST7, 4 AST6, 3 AST5, 2 AST4, 1 AST3, 1 AST1 permanent posts and 2 temporary AST4 posts; recalls that the budgetary impact of this measure was already taken into account in the estimates;
79. Transforms, in accordance with the new Staff Regulations, 80 AST permanent posts (25 AST 11, 10 AST 10, 5 AST 8, 15 AST 7, 5 AST 6, 5 AST 5, 5 AST 4, 5 AST 3 and 5 AST 2) into 80 AST/SC1 posts;
80. Proceeds to the following technical corrections: deletes three AST7 posts and three AST6 posts and adds six AST5 posts and deletes the footnote n°1 to the establishment plan, given that the relevant procedure has not been used in the recent past;
81. Authorises the creation of 43 new temporary posts (2 AD7, 19 AD5, 5 AST5, 5 AST3 and 12 AST1) and the upgrading of one temporary post AD 10 to an AD 14 for the supplementary needs relating to the creation of the new political group;

5 % staff reduction

82. Recalls that the Parliament is implementing the 5 % staff reduction target for the third consecutive year with a due respect for the letter and spirit of the IIA; underlines that, to this end, 171 permanent posts have been removed from its establishment plan since 2014¹; stresses that, in order to fully comply with the 5 % staff reduction target, two further annual reductions of 57 posts² should be made by 2018;
83. Underlines that, in accordance with point 27 of the IIA, the 5 % reduction target is a compensation in terms of staff, related to the increase in the working hours from 37,5 to 40 a week as compared to the establishment plan of 1 January 2013; considers that this reduction must apply to a constant workload and that, consequently, new responsibilities and missions must be exempted from this calculation;
84. Notes that, in line with the strengthening of its prerogatives and new tasks the Parliament has undergone since 2013, important structural changes, such as internalisation processes which have been staffed as far as possible by internal redeployments, new posts were only created when strictly necessary; decides to exclude these additional posts from the effort to reduce staff numbers by 5 %;
85. Urges the Commission, when monitoring the implementation of the staff reduction target by the Parliament, to take account of the new additional considerations such as

¹ -67 posts in 2014, -47 posts in 2015 and -57 posts in 2016

² Since a political decision on excluding the political groups from this calculation has been taken, this reduction is being applied to the Secretariat-General's part of the establishment plan (reference number of posts (1%): -57)

the constant workload, exemption of political groups, internalisations offset by reductions in external services budget lines, and new prerogatives and tasks;

86. Stresses that the implementation of the 5 % staff reduction should not jeopardise the proper functioning of the Parliament and the exercise by the Parliament of its core powers, nor alter its legislative excellence or the quality of the working conditions for Members and staff;
87. Recalls that no agreement can deprive the European Parliament and the Council of its sovereign freedom of evaluation and of its power to decide every year on the content of the budget;

Other staff related issues

88. Recalls that the need for new posts in the General Secretariat should be covered by internal redeployment, unless the need for creating new posts is duly justified and demonstrated;
89. Recalls that any reorganisation of parliamentary work or of the procedures should not lead to a deterioration in the working conditions and social rights of staff, regardless of their position;
90. Reiterates that, in order to ensure adequate support to the Members for the accomplishment of their parliamentary activities, a new balance is necessary between accredited parliamentary assistants and local assistants; takes note of the fact that the Secretary-General has made a proposal to the Bureau in order to achieve this goal; deplores that so far the Bureau has not yet decided in this regard; believes that a transition period should be respected when implementing the revision of the current rules; expects that the final decision will enter into force as of July 2016 at the latest, the end date of the transition period.
91. Reiterates its commitment to support multilingualism in parliamentary work through high standards of interpretation and translation; asks the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets the results of the analysis and assessment he launched after the non-agreement on new working conditions for interpreters (spring 2015); expects the Secretary-General to use all flexibility required to ensure high quality interpretation and translation services for Members.
92. Asks the Secretary-General to provide a detailed overview of all posts in Parliament in the years 2014-2016, including distribution of posts by service, category and type of contract;

Property policy

93. Recalls that the Committee on Budgets should be informed on a regular basis about new developments in Parliament's building policy and should be consulted in due time, that is before a contract is obtained, on any building project having financial implications; confirms that the financial impact of all building projects will be closely scrutinised;

94. Believes that decisions related to building projects should be subject to a transparent decision making process;
95. Reiterates once again its call for the new mid-term building strategy to be presented to the Committee on Budgets as soon as possible and at the latest by early 2016, in time for the preparation of the Parliament's estimates for the financial year 2017; invites the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets a possible long-term strategy until 2025 early in advance before the Parliament's reading of the budget in the autumn 2016;
96. Notes that since 2014 no appropriations have been provided for investment in the construction of the Konrad Adenauer building (KAD) in Luxembourg; recalls that the 2016 estimates included only appropriations to cover works and services to be paid directly by the Parliament, principally for the project management, technical expertise and consultancy; invites the Secretary General to evaluate, before the end of this year, the funds not used in the 2015 budget and to commit them to the KAD project, via a transfer request at year-end 2015, in order to avoid future building-related interest payments as far as possible;

Members' expenses

97. Reiterates the appeal for greater transparency regarding the general expenditure allowance for the Members; calls on the Parliament's Bureau to work on a definition of more precise rules regarding the accountability of the expenditure authorised under this allowance, without generating additional costs to the Parliament;
98. Requests an assessment on the results of the voluntary approach chosen by the Joint Working Group to limit business class flights by Members and staff as well as on the possible ways to obtain more advantageous tariffs with a view to reducing Member and staff travel expenses.

Section IV - Court of Justice

99. Deplores that, despite the continued increase in the volume of judicial activity and the planned reform of the General Court, the Commission has reduced staffing by 20 posts, thereby risking creating bottlenecks and jeopardising the proper functioning and prompt dispensation of justice; decides therefore to reinstate the 20 posts initially requested by the Court;
100. Regrets that Council has raised the standard abatement rate applied to the appropriations for staff remuneration from 2,5 % to 3,2 % which is equivalent to a reduction of EUR 1,55 million and contradicts the extremely high rate of occupation of posts of the Court (98 % at the end of 2014) and the high budget implementation rate (99 % in 2014); therefore readjusts the standard abatement rate to the level of the draft budget and cancels the related reduction in appropriations in order to ensure that the Court can deal adequately with the substantial increase in the number of cases and make full use of the posts granted to it;
101. Decides furthermore to reinstate the seven posts originally requested by the Court in order for it to meet the twofold requirement of strengthening the Safety and Security

section of the Court to better protect staff, visitors and documents, and at the same time implementing the new Article 105 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Court which requires a highly secure system to be set up in order to enable parties involved in certain cases to provide information and material pertaining to the security of the Union, the Member States or to the conduct of their international relations;

102. Underlines in the same context the need for resources for security and surveillance of the Court's buildings and decides therefore to restore the cuts proposed by Council in this area back to the level of the draft budget;
103. Removes the existing reserve regarding missions and replaces it with a new one, to be released when the Court publishes information on the external activities of Judges, as requested by Parliament in its 2013 discharge resolution related to the Court¹;

Section V - Court of Auditors

104. Readjusts the standard abatement rate to its initial level of 2,76 % in order to allow the Court of Auditors to meet its needs in respect of the establishment plan;
105. Restores all other lines cut by Council for the Court of Auditors to implement its work programme and deliver the planned Audit Reports;

Section VI - European Economic and Social Committee

106. Readjusts the standard abatement rate to its initial level of 4,5 % in order to allow the Committee to meet its needs and cope with the continued reduction of staff in the context of the cooperation agreement between the Parliament and the Committee;
107. Decides further to restore the draft budget regarding travel and subsistence allowances;

Section VII - Committee of the Regions

108. Reduces on the one hand the remuneration and allowances by an amount corresponding to 66 upgrades and four additional posts not already accounted for in the draft budget to reflect the transfer of those posts to the Parliament;
109. Increases on the other hand a number of lines (outsourcing of translation, third parties, communication, representation expenses, communication of political groups, missions and cleaning and maintenance) more in line with the Committee's own estimates in order for the Committee to carry out its political work and fulfil its obligations;
110. Finally, restores the cuts by Council regarding security and surveillance of the Committee's buildings to ensure sufficient financing for security measures in the event of increased security threat level ("yellow") during 2016;

Section VIII - European Ombudsman

¹ European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section IV – Court of Justice (Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0124).

111. Notes with regret that the Council has decreased the draft budget of the Ombudsman by EUR 135 000; underlines that this reduction would impose a disproportionate burden on the very limited budget of the Ombudsman and would have a major impact on the institution's capacity to serve European citizens effectively; therefore restores all the budget lines cut by Council in order to enable the Ombudsman to fulfil her mandate and commitments;

Section IX - European Data Protection Supervisor

112. Notes with regret that the Council has decreased the draft budget of the European Data Protection Supervisor by EUR 135 000; underlines that this reduction would impose a disproportionate burden on the Data Protection Supervisor's very limited budget and would have major impact on the institution's capacity to serve the Union institutions effectively; therefore restores all the budget lines cut by Council in order to enable the Data Protection Supervisor to fulfil his obligations and commitments;

Section X- European External Action Service

113. Believes that, in order to be able to cope with the challenges posed by geopolitical uncertainty and to ensure the Union's role across the world, due financing of the EEAS needs to be ensured; restores therefore the draft budget on all lines and deletes the reserves adopted by Council related to the fluctuation of the Euro exchange rate;

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114. Is convinced that the Union budget can contribute to addressing effectively not only the consequences but also the root causes of the crises that the Union is currently facing; takes the view, however, that unforeseen events with an Union-wide dimension should be tackled by pooling efforts and putting additional means at Union level rather than by calling past commitments into question or reverting to the illusion of purely national solutions; stresses, therefore, that flexibility provisions are there to enable such a joint and speedy response and should be used to the full in order to make up for the tight constraints of the MFF ceilings;
115. Underlines that, barely two years after the beginning of the current MFF, the Commission has had to twice request the mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument, as well as the deployment of the Contingency Margin, in order to cover pressing and unforeseen needs that could not be financed within the existing MFF ceilings; also notes that the Global Margin for Commitments in 2015, the first year of its operation, was immediately utilised to its full extent while the resources of two important Union programmes needed to be reduced to allow for the financing of new initiatives; underlines that, due to the frontloading in 2014-15, several Union programmes have less or even no commitments available as of 2016; clearly sees, therefore, that the MFF ceilings are too tight in many headings and paralyse the Union in areas of greatest need, while the available MFF flexibility mechanisms have already been pushed to their limits; considers that these developments make the case for a genuine MFF mid-term revision; eagerly anticipates the ambitious Commission proposals to that effect in 2016;

116. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, together with the amendments to the draft general budget, to the Council, the Commission, the other institutions and bodies concerned and the national parliaments.

1.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Budgets

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Cristian Dan Preda

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the increase in commitment and payment appropriations in Heading 4, Global Europe, compared to the preceding year, which should give the means to the European Union to uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizen in its relations with the wider world; notes in particular the importance of the considerably increased payments, which will help deal with the substantial backlog that has accumulated in recent years; therefore strongly opposes the cuts proposed by Council to commitment and payment appropriations;
2. Emphasises the particular importance of providing sufficient funding for the European Neighbourhood Instrument, which plays a vital role in supporting stability among Europe's Eastern and Southern neighbours; strongly welcomes the 4.9% increase in commitment appropriations compared to last year; notes critically the severe cuts applied to the ENI by Council and stresses the urgent need to increase appropriations by a substantial margin to meet the needs of the countries covered by the instrument; stresses the critical nature of the problems affecting Libya and Tunisia and the importance of providing more support to contribute to capacity-building for its institutions, justice reform, security sector reform and border assistance;

3. Underlines the importance of increasing commitments and payments in the 2016 budget to fight terrorism;
4. Stresses that the defence of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the promotion of democracy is a matter of vital importance in the current global environment and symbolic of the Union's commitments to its core values; emphasises that the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights is an essential tool in this regard, which needs to be provided with adequate funding;
5. Notes the conclusions of the European Council of 25 June 2015; stresses that the CFSP entails strong commitments to visibility and flexibility, notably to the development of civilian and military capacities, to reinforcing the defence industry and to SMEs; to that end, strongly welcomes the Council's readiness to ensure appropriate funding for the preparatory action on CSDP related research, paving the way for a dedicated and well-funded defence research and technology program in the next MFF;
6. Underlines the importance of budgeting sufficient funds for the Middle East Peace Process, the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA in order to meet the needs on the ground, which have increased in recent years due to multiple regional crises; emphasises the need to address the regular under-planning of EU financial support to UNRWA in the EU budget;
7. Appreciates the ongoing reflection process taking place in the EEAS on the future of EU Special Representatives and their relationship with the EEAS; considers that any change to the budget line for EU Special Representatives should only take place after the current reflection process is concluded;
8. Supports the EEAS' plan to open an EU delegation in Iran in the wake of the successful conclusion of the nuclear talks.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	31.8.2015
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 7 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Michèle Alliot-Marie, Elmar Brok, Klaus Buchner, James Carver, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Lorenzo Cesa, Arnaud Danjean, Mark Demesmaecker, Georgios Epitideios, Knut Fleckenstein, Eugen Freund, Michael Gahler, Iveta Grigule, Sandra Kalniete, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Andrey Kovatchev, Eduard Kukan, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Arne Lietz, Barbara Lochbihler, Sabine Lösing, Andrejs Mamikins, David McAllister, Tamás Meszerics, Demetris Papadakis, Alojz Peterle, Tonino Picula, Andrej Plenković, Cristian Dan Preda, Jozo Radoš, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Jaromír Štětina, Charles Tannock, Eleni Theoharous, László Tőkés, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Geoffrey Van Orden
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Caspary, Neena Gill, Ana Gomes, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Othmar Karas, Javi López, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Norbert Neuser, Urmas Paet, Gilles Pargneaux, Helmut Scholz
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Heidi Hautala, Jutta Steinruck

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Arne Lietz

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Firmly rejects the Council's cuts in the funding for development cooperation and humanitarian aid;
2. Considers the cuts in the Development Cooperation Instrument lines to be particularly inappropriate in light of the massive financing needs of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Union's pledge, renewed in connection with the UN's financing for a development conference in July this year, to increase its collective official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of its GNI;
3. Recalls the commitment of developed countries to scale up their climate finance for developing countries and ensure that this is new and additional to non-climate ODA; stresses that this commitment implies at least an equal scaling up of the total ODA; notes the significance of this to the prospect of reaching a new global climate agreement later this year;
4. Notes the growth of the number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world to an unprecedented level of 60 million and the consequent growth in the need for humanitarian aid; welcomes the Council's maintenance of the humanitarian aid amounts in the Commission's Draft Budget; considers, however, that €26 million should be added to line 23 02 01 and used for education in refugee camps as well as in emergencies and crisis situations, as this can provide life-saving skills, help children build a future and shield them from radicalisation;
5. Holds that given the current refugee crisis, the Draft Budget amounts on line 21 02 07 05 for migration and asylum must not be reduced, but should rather be increased; stresses that this line should be used for measures to address root causes of migration

and support for proper management of migratory flows in developing countries;

6. Points to the need to also reinforce line 21 02 08 02, as local authorities will have a big role in providing basic social services and in handling challenges of urbanisation in the post-2015 development framework.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	22.9.2015
Result of final vote	+ : 24 - : 1 0 : 1
Members present for the final vote	Louis Aliot, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Ignazio Corrao, Nirj Deva, Doru-Claudian Frunzulică, Nathan Gill, Charles Goerens, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Heidi Hautala, Maria Heubuch, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Arne Lietz, Linda McAvan, Norbert Neuser, Maurice Ponga, Cristian Dan Preda, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Elly Schlein, György Schöpflin, Davor Ivo Stier, Paavo Väyrynen, Bogdan Brunon Wenta
Substitutes present for the final vote	Brian Hayes, Eleni Theocharous
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Liliana Rodrigues, Estefanía Torres Martínez

2.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

for the Committee on Budgets

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Reimer Böge

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that adequate appropriations should be allocated to the trade-related budget lines to enable the Commission to efficiently and effectively pursue its ambitious trade agenda aimed at creating growth and jobs across Europe and attaining the Union's wider international goals as well as to step up its efforts regarding the monitoring of the implementation and the effects of trade agreements;
2. Stresses that the Union should step up its efforts regarding the monitoring of the implementation and the repercussions of trade agreements signed or currently being negotiated by the Union; calls for the earmarking of sufficient resources for ex-ante, interim and ex-post assessments of trade agreements to evaluate their effects on the economy of the EU and its partner countries and to ensure that those obligations entered into by trading partners are fully implemented and enforced;
3. Welcomes the increasing role of NGOs in shaping public opinion on trade-related matters, stresses the need for an effective Union communication strategy to inform and allow for better engagement with citizens and with civil society organisations active in trade issues;
4. Welcomes the slight increase in commitments for the Instrument for Macro-Financial Assistance and the European Neighbourhood Instrument; is concerned, however, that these increases will not be sufficient to respond to the needs in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood, including possible further assistance programmes for Ukraine;

5. Emphasises that the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement reached at the 9th Ministerial Conference of the WTO will require increased funding support for the least developed and developing countries; stresses the need for coordinated efforts between the Commission and the Member States with regard to international financial institutions in order to avoid reduced appropriations for Aid for Trade and multilateral initiatives as well as irregularities in relation to cooperation with certain partners leading to reduced spending effectiveness, and to ensure the Trade Facilitation Agreement works for development;
6. Recalls that Parliament introduced an additional credit of EUR 1 million in 2009 specifically for actions related to Fair Trade in the budgetary line aimed at financing projects in the area of external trade, and calls on the Commission to consider re-introducing this budget line in 2016 to finance actions related to Fair Trade, as defined by the Commission Communication of 5 May 2009¹ ;
7. Notes the moderate increase in appropriations for the Partnership Instrument; recalls the programme objective to foster international trade and investment opportunities of European SMEs; stresses the importance of technical support for SMEs to help them become more international; calls on the Commission to assess and improve the existing tools regarding their efficiency and effectiveness and to ensure sufficient controls and oversight of all activities, such as European business centres, with the aim of developing a more coherent approach, while also taking existing private initiatives into account;

¹ *COM (2009)0215.*

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	31.8.2015
Result of final vote	+: 24 -: 5 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	William (The Earl of) Dartmouth, Maria Arena, David Borrelli, David Campbell Bannerman, Daniel Caspary, Marielle de Sarnez, Ska Keller, Jude Kirton-Darling, David Martin, Emmanuel Maurel, Emma McClarkin, Anne-Marie Mineur, Sorin Moisă, Alessia Maria Mosca, Viviane Reding, Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández, Marietje Schaake, Helmut Scholz, Joachim Schuster, Joachim Starbatty, Adam Szejnfeld, Hannu Takkula, Iuliu Winkler
Substitutes present for the final vote	Reimer Böge, Klaus Buchner, Edouard Ferrand, Sander Loones, Gabriel Mato, Marita Ulvskog, Jarosław Wałęsa, Pablo Zalba Bidegain
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Miguel Urbán Crespo

22.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY CONTROL

for the Committee on Budgets

on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Ingeborg Gräßle

SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas in a situation of scarce resources, greater importance should be attached to the need to observe budgetary discipline and to use funds efficiently and effectively;
 - B. whereas the main objective of the 2016 draft budget will be to ensure that the Union budget is provided with the means it requires to fully deliver its reinforced contribution to jobs, growth, investment and solidarity, and to respond to new developments, in particular in Ukraine and Syria, and their impact on immigration, humanitarian aid and security;
 - C. whereas the dialogue between Parliament and the Commission provided for in Article 318 TFEU should stimulate a performance-oriented culture inside the Commission;
- 1. Urges the Commission, as suggested by the European Court of Auditors in its 2012 and 2013 annual reports, to prepare and publish annually a long-range cash flow forecast that will assist stakeholders in assessing future payment requirements and budgetary priorities and will help the Commission to take the decisions needed to ensure that essential payments can be met from approved annual budgets;
 - 2. Points out that, at the end of 2013, gross pre-financing amounted to EUR 79,4 billion, and stresses that extended periods of pre-financing can lead to an increased risk of error or loss; recalls that this risk is particularly relevant to Heading 4 of the budget (EU as a global player) where, for a typical operation, four years elapse between a commitment being made and the Commission recording the final related expenditure;
 - 3. Notes that the implementation of financial corrections imposed by the Commission on Member States that fail to implement sound systems and recoveries amounted to about

EUR 2 980 million in 2014 which is less than in 2013 (EUR 3 362 million)¹; asks the Commission to clearly indicate what amounts recovered in 2014 have been registered as revenue in the accounts of the Union or have been offset, and the extent to which financial corrections and recoveries decided in 2014 may impact on payment requirements for the 2015 and 2016 budgets;

4. Asks the Commission and the Member States to improve transparency with regard to the recoveries, in particular with regard to the year in which payment is made, the year in which the related error is detected and the year in which recoveries or financial corrections are disclosed in the notes to the accounts;
5. Calls on the Commission to provide Parliament with a summary of the costs actually incurred and the funding tranches made available for the structural fund projects already funded during the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 funding periods and for those which have still not yet been completed;
6. Reiterates its demand that the Commission draft proposals to sanction false or incorrect reporting by the Member States' authorities in the management of Union funds; recalls that almost all paying agencies for direct payments were accredited and certified by the certifying authorities in the Member States and is therefore concerned that some paying agencies have particularly high error rates; calls in this context on the Member States to implement a 'better spending' of the Union budget by ensuring more effective and efficient national management and control systems; also calls on the Commission to submit proposals for ways in which Member States can strengthen ex-ante checks so as to reduce the number of sums unduly paid, and secure a system whereby proper investigations are carried out into suspicions of false or incorrect reporting and such reporting is sanctioned;
7. Calls on the Commission to include in its annual report on the protection of the financial interests of the Union and the fight against fraud an assessment of the impact of corruption in each Member State on Union funds in the relevant year, and to set out a specific, targeted plan of action to combat such corruption;
8. Urges the Commission to improve transparency in the use of financial engineering instruments (FEI), to regularly report on leverage, losses and risks and to present a cost-benefit analysis of FEIs compared with more direct forms of project funding; calls on the Commission to implement effective monitoring systems to analyse the demand for financial instruments in the Member States, which would lower the risk of overcapitalisation;
9. Asks the Commission to ensure that the combined budget of the OLAF Supervisory Committee and its Secretariat is specified in a separate line of the OLAF budget for 2016;
10. Insists that, when providing Parliament and the Council with the evaluations of the Union's performance provided for in Article 318 TFEU, the Commission should report on

¹ See Commission report of 3 June 2015 entitled 'Synthesis of the Commission's management achievements in 2014' (COM(2015)0279), point 2.4.

the results achieved with the operational expenditure as presented in the programme statements of operational expenditure accompanying the draft Union budget;

11. In this regard, calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the functioning of the decentralised agencies of the Union and, in particular, to their visibility and democratic accountability, in light of their distant locations and of lack of awareness of Union citizens of their activities and even of their existence;
12. Reminds that there is an urgent need to concentrate on the accountability and performance of the use of the Union budget; therefore, calls for the development of concrete evaluation mechanisms and indicators;
13. Calls on the Commission to explain in detail its transparency policies with regard to Union funding, and, in particular, its measures to provide for balanced decision-making, involving all relevant stakeholders, including consumer organisations, SME's, trade unions and general interest organisations, in particular environmental organisations;
14. Considering that the Commission is proposing far less legislative initiatives than in the past due to its new 'better regulation' policies, calls on the Commission to explain in detail the budgetary and staffing implications of this shift in emphasis from legislative to implementing activities and, in particular, to indicate whether economies can be made in this regard;
15. Calls on the Commission to support effective implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies at local and regional level in order to ensure that the funds available for the integration of Roma are actually spent for this purpose and that they target the objectives of the mainstream policies;
16. Urges the Commission to report to Parliament on Union funded measures to combat youth unemployment and on the results achieved with those measures;
17. Calls on the budgetary authorities to reflect on the Union's efforts to prevent and combat fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities affecting its financial interests; emphasises in this respect that budgetary cuts in programmes such as the Hercule programmes or the Anti-Fraud Information System (AFIS) would be detrimental to the Union budget, as they support OLAF and the Member States to protect the Union's financial interests;
18. Points out that, during the discharge procedure for the financial year 2013 concerning the Court of Justice of the European Union, Parliament received insufficient information regarding the list of external activities pursued by the judges; recalls that the Court of Justice publishes on its homepage a register which includes detailed information on the external activities of each judge.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	22.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 1 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Nedzhmi Ali, Louis Aliot, Inés Ayala Sender, Zigmantas Balčytis, Ryszard Czarnecki, Dennis de Jong, Tamás Deutsch, Martina Dlabajová, Jens Geier, Ingeborg Gräßle, Rina Ronja Kari, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Monica Macovei, Dan Nica, Georgi Pirinski, Petri Sarvamaa, Claudia Schmidt, Igor Šoltes, Bart Staes, Marco Valli, Derek Vaughan, Anders Primdahl Vistisen
Substitutes present for the final vote	Richard Ashworth, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Karin Kadenbach, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Markus Pieper, Julia Pitera, Miroslav Poche, Patricija Šulin
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Raymond Finch

8.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Budgets

on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016 – all sections
2015/2132(BUD)

Rapporteur for the opinion: Peter Simon

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes how the pace of economic recovery and long-term growth prospects in the EU are being affected by the slowdown in investment, reflecting the budgetary and economic situation in the Member States; welcomes therefore the draft budget's strong emphasis, in point 1.1, on creating fresh impetus for jobs, growth, investment, and more competitiveness through a favourable environment for entrepreneurship;
2. Considers that in order to solidify the economic recovery in the European Union, the 2016 budget should be higher in real terms vis-à-vis the 2015 budget;
3. Highlights the crucial role to be played by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) in closing gaps not covered by the market and mobilising private investments and new sources of finance for investment, boosting competitiveness and economic recovery, as well as increasing market confidence; welcomes the agreement reached by the co-legislators on the increase in contributions to the EFSI to EUR 3 billion financed by the overall budgetary margins in the period 2016 to 2020; reaffirms its determination to further reduce the budgetary impact on Horizon 2020 and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF);
4. Calls for the 2016 budget to reflect European Semester's priorities including boosting investment, supporting job creation, pursuing structural reforms and fiscal consolidation that lead to real, sustainable growth;
5. Draws attention to the present and future crucial role of the three European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) in relation to Union-level financial supervision and the banking union; emphasises that the 2016 draft budget must provide sufficient budgetary resources for the

ESAs corresponding to the newly allocated roles of the agencies, as well as external factors such as exchange rate fluctuations and general increases in levels of pay;

6. Recalls that the European Parliament strongly supported the creation of the ESAs and believes that the Union needs to further improve the quality of supervision across the Union; believes that the ESAs play an important part in the functioning of financial markets in the Union;
7. Highlights, in this regard, the need for the ESAs to be not only properly financed but also adequately staffed, both numerically and in terms of levels of qualification, to be able to perform the growing tasks assigned to them in a high quality manner; to that end, calls on the Joint Committee of the European Supervisory Authorities to submit a report on the authorities' future staffing needs and financing requirements;
8. Notes that the ESAs are currently financed from compulsory contributions by the national member authorities, money from the EU budget and charges payable by the institutions they supervise; considers that this financial arrangement is nationally oriented, inflexible, burdensome and a potential threat to the independence of the ESAs; renews its call to the Commission, therefore, to submit by 2017 at the latest a proposal for a financing concept that is financed by fees replacing completely the current contributions from member states; sees this system as a means of securing both the European authorities' independence from their national member authorities and the full integrity of the ESAs vis-à-vis financial market participants;
9. Emphasises the increasing importance of greater transparency in relation to corporate taxation and tax rulings and of a coordinated effort to fight tax evasion and avoidance; calls, therefore, for the 2016 budget to reflect adequately the importance of the Fiscalis programme for enhancing Member States' cooperation in the operation of tax systems; calls also for careful consideration of the European Commission's consultation on corporate tax transparency, especially with regards to country-by-country reporting;
10. Calls on the Commission, when implementing the planned restructuring measures with regard to adequate staffing, to focus on its main priorities; emphasises, in that regard, the role of the department responsible for state aid, so as to ensure that taxation practices in relation to tax rulings and other measures similar in nature or effect which are questionable under state aid rules can, in future, be more properly investigated, thus helping to make corporate taxation in the European Union fairer and the distribution of tax revenue between private individuals and enterprises more balanced;
11. Highlights the need for more Europe-wide statistics which are more comprehensive, methodological comparable, accurate and timely; welcomes, therefore, the provision in the draft budget for an adequate increase in expenditure on applying new methods of generating European statistics and on enhanced cooperation within the European Statistical System;
12. Re-emphasises the need to secure sufficient financing in the draft budget for civil-society capacity building in the area of financial services;
13. Calls for the implementation of the recommendations of the Maystadt report referring to the task and responsibilities of the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group

(EFRAG), thereby also strengthening the European Union's influence in international accounting standard-setting;

14. Claims that the representatives on the IASB board should be democratically nominated and accountable. The European Parliament should play its role in selecting European representatives and hold them accountable;
15. Asks ESMA to ensure that the European Parliament including the responsible Members and their staff have effective access to documents at the same time as the board of supervisors.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 40 -: 12 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Gerolf Annemans, Hugues Bayet, Pervenche Berès, Udo Bullmann, Anneliese Dodds, Elisa Ferreira, Sven Giegold, Roberto Gualtieri, Brian Hayes, Danuta Maria Hübner, Diane James, Petr Ježek, Philippe Lamberts, Sander Loones, Olle Ludvigsson, Ivana Maletić, Notis Marias, Fulvio Martusciello, Marisa Matias, Bernard Monot, Stanisław Ożóg, Dariusz Rosati, Alfred Sant, Molly Scott Cato, Peter Simon, Theodor Dumitru Stolojan, Kay Swinburne, Paul Tang, Michael Theurer, Marco Valli, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Cora van Nieuwenhuizen, Miguel Viegas, Jakob von Weizsäcker, Pablo Zalba Bidegain
Substitutes present for the final vote	Alain Cadec, Matt Carthy, Mady Delvaux, Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță, Sophia in 't Veld, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Barbara Kappel, Jeppe Kofod, Thomas Mann, Alessia Maria Mosca, Siegfried Mureșan, Eva Paunova, Michel Reimon, Andreas Schwab, Tibor Szanyi, Romana Tomc, Beatrix von Storch
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Sven Schulze, Axel Voss

3.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

for the Committee on Budgets

on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016 - all sections
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Giovanni La Via

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls that a high level of environmental and health protection in the Union is a precondition for economic prosperity, and that food and feed safety and mechanisms to help protect against natural and man-made disasters are of core value to all European citizens and, hence, to the European Parliament;
2. Is at the same time fully aware that the policies and financing instruments in the remit of this committee are small compared to other policy and financing instruments under Headings 2 and 3 and do not receive as much attention as other programmes and funds; strongly rejects therefore any further reduction of funding of programmes and budget lines as the impact would not be tolerable; urges Member States, in particular, to view the implementation of environmental and climate-friendly policies, actions and projects as a chance to foster growth and sustainable development, and not as a burden; stresses that green job creation and economic growth among Union SMEs stem in part from the implementation of environmental legislation;
3. Acknowledges that strong budgetary constraints exist at national level and that consolidation efforts are ongoing; points out, however, that the substantial European added value of the policies and financing instruments in the remit of this committee has to be borne in mind by the European Parliament and the Council when deciding on the Draft Budget (DB) 2016;
4. Deeply regrets that the Council has proposed budget cuts which appear to be of a horizontal nature to some important programmes, in particular to the Third programme for the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020), on lines pertaining to food

and feed safety, and on disaster prevention and preparedness within the Union; in the context of the accession of the Union to international conventions (e.g. the Nagoya Protocol), rejects the reduction of the corresponding budgetary lines proposed by the Council;

5. Recalls that, in general, the level of resources allocated to budgetary lines that are in the remit of this committee has to be maintained at the 2015 level; calls, therefore, for the initial amounts indicated in the draft budget to be fully restored for all programmes and financing instruments in the remit of this committee;
6. Recalls that Horizon 2020 will contribute to objectives in the remit of this committee with research projects in the areas of climate, health and environment; affirms its commitment to monitor the alignment of the projects with the corresponding objectives and the progress of their implementation; criticises sharply the decision to cut funding for this programme in order to finance the EFSI guarantee;
7. Underlines that environmental research and innovation finds its centre of gravity in Horizon 2020's: "[Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials](#)", which has the objective of achieving a resource efficient and climate change resilient economy and society, protecting and sustainably managing natural resources and ecosystems and ensuring a sustainable supply and use of raw materials, in order to meet the needs of a growing global population within the sustainable limits of natural resources and eco-systems;
8. Notes that the EU Draft Budget for 2016 amounts to EUR 153,5 billion in commitment appropriations (including EUR 4,5 billion reprogrammed from 2014) and EUR 143,5 billion in payment appropriations; points out that, disregarding the effect of the reprogramming in 2015 and 2016, this corresponds to an increase of +2,4 % in commitments and +1,6 % in payments as compared to the 2015 budget; stresses that these overall moderate increases, following the path set by the MFF and accounting for inflation, represent almost no increase in real terms, which emphasises the importance of the efficiency and effectiveness of the spending;
9. Recalls that, regarding payment appropriations, recent years have been very difficult and that the implementation of Union policies has been hampered by severe constraints in the level of authorised payment appropriations, leading to recurrent amending budgets to cover parts of the outstanding needs;
10. Strongly rejects the possibility that, in the case of insufficient payments in 2016, the Commission could decide, as it has done in the past, not to use commitment appropriations to the full, which would contravene Parliament's repeated commitment in the areas of environment, health, food and feed safety; concludes in addition that the lack of payments will damage the reputation of the Union as beneficiaries under the respective programmes are left unpaid;
11. Recalls that LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the Union; highlights, in particular, the problems entailed by the lack of payment appropriation for the LIFE programme, which would impede and delay the proper implementation of this important programme;

12. Welcomes the increase in the LIFE budget by EUR 27,7 million in the DB 2016; notes however that the LIFE programme constitutes a share of only 0,3 % of the whole DB 2016 and accounts for only 0,73 % of Heading 2 (in commitments) and that these percentages have remained stable over past years;
13. Points out the paramount importance of investments in research and innovation in several areas which are under the remit of this committee and stresses that the budget 2016 must appropriately reflect that such investments are a priority; points out that the sustainable growth and innovation capacity of Union SMEs is one of the main competitive advantages that the EU has in globalised markets;
14. Recalls in particular the very substantial added value of the Union in medical research (e.g. research for paediatric and orphan medicines) and also in fighting cross-border health threats; against this background, deeply regrets that the public health programme, with a total amount in commitments of only EUR 62,2 million, which represents, as in previous years, a share of only 0,04 % in commitments in the DB 2016, does not fully reflect the importance of health as a value in itself and as a prerequisite to promote growth; calls on the Council to reconsider further budgetary reductions that it has introduced with regard to this programme;
15. Emphasises that the result of the economic and financial crisis and the stringent austerity policies implemented by the Member States has been budget cuts and a fall in tax receipts, that these in turn have led to reductions in funding for public health systems, and that health inequality in the EU is placing a serious burden on Member States and their health systems, and calls, therefore, for increased funding for coordinated public preventive measures in this area;
16. Emphasises that environmentally sustainable agriculture which makes prudent use of natural resources is essential to food production, and calls for more support to be given to farmers who employ environmentally sound and animal-friendly methods;
17. Highlights that the Union has the highest standards for food safety in the world; stresses the importance of promotion of healthy and safe food as a means to prevent unnecessary spending in healthcare and to help Member States to improve the long term sustainability of their health systems; therefore, also regrets that the food and feed programme, with a total amount in commitments of only EUR 264,1 million, which represents a share of only 0,17 % in commitments in the DB 2016 and proposed further cuts by the Council, does not fully reflect the importance of the issue of food and feed safety in the Union;
18. Recalls that the Union Civil Protection Mechanism is a cornerstone of Union solidarity; recalls that the primary responsibility for the protection of people, as well as the environment and property, including cultural heritage, lies with Member States; underlines that the Union plays an "enabling role" to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of Member States in the prevention of, preparedness for, and response to disasters; welcomes the slight increase in the commitments for this programme proposed by the Commission, but deeply regrets the Council's proposal to reduce the budget of that line;
19. Calls on the Member States to ensure proper environmental inspections to reduce the

risk of environmental disasters;

20. Recalls the paramount role of decentralised agencies in carrying out technical, scientific or managerial tasks that substantially help Union institutions make and implement policies;
21. Believes that, as a general rule, decentralised agencies have to bear their fair share in cost savings as other institutions; notes that enhanced cooperation between agencies which are under this committee's remit (EEA, ECHA, ECDC, EFSA, EMA) and the continuous commitment to increase efficiency has already led to better spending and use of funds;
22. Recalls, moreover, the very important tasks that these five decentralised agencies perform, both for the European Commission and for the Union citizens, and also for external customers of the fee-earning agencies (e.g. ECHA, EMA); highlights, against this background, that it is paramount that these agencies receive adequate human and financial resources to be able to perform properly, independently and in a timely manner these demanding and paramount tasks;
23. Is, therefore, concerned about the approach taken by the Commission on decentralised agencies as the cuts imposed on them, especially in human resources, are unfair and inadequate in comparison to those imposed on other Union institutions; is determined to return to a proper case-by-case evaluation of the respective needs of each agency;
24. Is, in general, not convinced that the externalisation of services aimed at reducing staffing establishment plans will be more cost-efficient in the long-run as service contractors need supervision and guidance, while looking for profit at the same time;
25. Stresses that pilot projects (PPs) and preparatory actions (PAs) are very valuable tools to initiate new activities and policies; reiterates that several ideas of this committee have been implemented successfully in the past; will therefore make further use of those instruments in 2016; encourages the full use of the margins available under each heading;
26. Notes the result of the Commission's pre-assessment of the implementability of PPs proposed by Members of the ENVI Committee and which generally reflect ENVI Committee priorities in the area of environment and health; calls on the Commission to set up a follow-up procedure to keep Parliament informed of the progress and level of implementation of PPs and PAs.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 50 -: 8 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Marco Affronte, Zoltán Balczó, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mireille D'Ornano, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Ian Duncan, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Sylvie Goddyn, Matthias Groote, Jytte Guteland, György Hölvényi, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Benedek Jávor, Karin Kadenbach, Kateřina Konečná, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Susanne Melior, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, Marcus Pretzell, Frédérique Ries, Michèle Rivasi, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Renate Sommer, Dubravka Šuica, Tibor Szanyi, Claudiu Cîprian Tănăsescu, Nils Torvalds, Glenis Willmott, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Nicola Caputo, Fredrick Federley, Peter Jahr, Mairead McGuinness, Gesine Meissner, Ulrike Müller, Marijana Petir

3.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

for the Committee on Budgets

on the Council position on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that the responsibility of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection in the budget procedure covers budget lines in titles 2 (Internal market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs), 14 (Taxation and customs union) and 33 (Justice and consumer protection);
2. Recalls that the Single Market (SM) is a key driver for the creation of jobs and growth, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); notes, however, that this potential remains untapped in many respects, such as the Digital Single Market; calls, therefore, for more efficient spending of the budget through the establishment of a clear set of financing priorities for the advancement of the SM and the consequential development of the economy;
3. Welcomes the significant increase in the amount allocated to budget line 14 02 01 on 'Supporting the functioning and modernisation of the Customs Union'; supports the achievement and application of the programme's goals via the furthering of existing modernisation initiatives, particularly the electronic customs project, and by developing a strategy for commonly managed and operated IT systems in customs related areas, as well as by improving appropriate coordination between Member States, promoting the exchange of best practices, timely implementation and monitoring the correct application of Union legislation;
4. Considers that consumers are at the core of the new digital economic model and is convinced that the budget for this policy area should reflect this; notes therefore that it is

important to secure funding for updating consumer policy to ensure sound adjustment to rapid technological and economic change;

5. Asks for the financing of a new pilot project entitled ‘Consumer Empowerment and Education on the safety of products and market surveillance in the Digital Single Market (DSM)’, as an appropriate follow-up project to the one-year pilot project entitled ‘Training SMEs on Consumer Rights in the Digital Age’ proposed by the IMCO Committee for 2015, contributing to a large public education campaign to help consumers and businesses understand the complex rules and regulations associated with e-commerce;
6. Stresses that this should help citizens and SMEs comply with consumer protection law in the online environment; emphasises that, in a truly connected DSM, every consumer should be able to benefit from the same quality of services and products purchased online and receive sufficient information for the purchase in a transparent manner;
7. Finds it important that relevant authorities have the ability to stop the products and make the companies recall or withdraw the products from the European market; considers that the simplification and unification of rules and standards would reduce potential compliance problems, and consequently benefit both consumers and traders; considers, in this regard, that traders should also receive information on how to settle their taxes from cross-border transactions within the Union through the efficient use of the VATMOSS system;
8. Recalls the need to finance the multilingual tool for the Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform; emphasises that well-functioning ODR systems across the Union will encourage consumers to seek solutions to the problems they encounter when buying products and services in the SM and will boost online purchases; recalls that more online and cross-border trade in the Union will also broaden consumer choice and provide businesses with new opportunities, give access to new markets and help generate more economic growth;
9. Acknowledges the importance of the ‘Single Market Forum’; recalls that 2015 is the final year of the preparatory action and, for that reason, a new legislative proposal should be urgently launched by the Commission in order to secure the continuation of this essential event;
10. Emphasises that SOLVIT has a good record of customer satisfaction when resolving problems affecting citizens; believes that more could be done to improve how governance tools operate together, to improve the awareness of such tools and to maximise value from the resources allocated to them; invites further reflection on the possibility for consolidation of these tools in future budgetary proposals; notes its support for budget line 02 03 04 on internal market governance tools; believes that the European Consumer Centres Network should also be given appropriate funding allowing it to continue its mission of educating citizens on their consumer rights in Europe;
11. Believes that supporting the real economy should be the key priority for the Union for job creation and sustainable growth; urges that SMEs be better informed of this option so that the uptake of this financial support especially by SMEs be maximised; **strongly calls** for the making available of sufficient financing for a transition to a resource-efficient, circular economy;

12. Points out the need to secure adequate financing for the COSME programme and for the Enterprise Europe Network in 2016 in order to foster growth of SMEs and help them to overcome challenges related to access to the single market as well as the global market through better access to information about opportunities outside their own Member State as well as beyond the Union's borders; emphasises that securing good access to finance, and increasing the uptake of digital tools, are crucial for keeping undertakings competitive;
13. Welcomes the increase in budget line 02 04 02 03 'Increasing innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)' and budget line 02 03 'Internal market for goods and services', and suggests that the Commission monitor the effectiveness of the projects financed in order to increase innovation for SMEs;
14. Is concerned at the drastic reduction in budget lines 02 02 01 'Promoting entrepreneurship and improving the competitiveness and access to markets of Union enterprises' and 02 02 02 'Improving access to finance for small and middle-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the form of equity and debt' as part of the COSME programme;
15. Highlights that standards are important tools for the competitiveness of undertakings whose participation in the standardisation process is essential for technological progress as well as for the comparability of material and product quality in the Union; therefore, agrees that payments under budget line 02 03 02 01 aimed at supporting standardisation activities performed by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI should be raised in accordance with the Commission proposal.
16. In light of the adoption of the eCall Regulation, calls for proper funding to be given to the European GNSS Agency in order to fully implement the regulation.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.9.2015
Result of final vote	+ : 26 - : 5 0 : 1
Members present for the final vote	Dita Charanzová, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Daniel Dalton, Nicola Danti, Dennis de Jong, Pascal Durand, Vicky Ford, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Evelyne Gebhardt, Maria Grapini, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Robert Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Margot Parker, Eva Paunova, Jiří Pospíšil, Virginie Rozière, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Igor Šoltes, Catherine Stihler, Mylène Troszczynski, Anneleen Van Bossuyt
Substitutes present for the final vote	Lucy Anderson, Birgit Collin-Langen, Kaja Kallas, Jens Nilsson, Marc Tarabella, Lambert van Nistelrooij
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Andrey Novakov, Adam Szejnfeld

1.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

for the Committee on Budgets

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Massimiliano Salini

SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Underlines that the funding planned for the transport sector is justifiably linked to other policies such as cohesion, competition, the environment, research, tourism and security; notes that transport infrastructures are fundamental to the freedom of movement of persons, goods and services on which the single market project is based, and that this freedom of movement is both a powerful catalyst for EU integration and a key factor in the performance of European trade and industry.
2. Stresses, given that the priority of European policies is to bring about a recovery in growth and jobs, that infrastructure projects contribute to that recovery both directly, through the jobs created on project sites, and indirectly, through the use and maintenance of this infrastructure and more widely by boosting the competitiveness of the regions concerned; welcomes the fact that, in the discussions on the Juncker plan, all the Member States supported this approach and took the view that investments in strategic infrastructure should not be penalised by the Stability Pact.
3. Notes that the agreement on the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) results in cuts in the Connected Europe Facility (CEF); welcomes the initiative seeking to boost the involvement of the private sector in funding transport projects by means of innovative financial instruments; notes, however, that some projects are less attractive for this type of operator as they yield too low or uncertain a return on investment; nevertheless, recalls that the purpose of the EFSI is to correct market failure in sectors with a profitability risk profile which could discourage private investors, stresses, that although investments in railways, sustainable urban mobility and inland waterways produce substantial socio-economic and environmental benefits, they are less profitable and need grants for their

implementation; emphasises that, whatever the funding method adopted, the contribution from the EU budget must concentrate on projects of high European added value.

4. Stresses the importance of TEN-T, not only as nodal points of connection within Europe, but also as a chance to launch individual domestic markets, local economies and urban and metropolitan areas; stresses, therefore, the importance of completing the priority corridors defined at European level, particularly for high-speed rail routes; draws attention to the unprecedented interest demonstrated by Member States at the 2014 CEF-T calls and to the great number of eligible high quality projects submitted that could not be adopted due to a lack of available funds; insists in this regard that the funding provided for in the MFF must be respected and reviewed, both for commitments and for payments, in order to successfully achieve the CEF priorities and objectives and to top up the budget allocated for CEF.
5. Calls on the Commission to take into account, with a view to the allocation of funds from the CEF, the economic and social difficulties some Member States are currently facing which risk considerably hampering the submission of projects; calls, therefore, on the Commission to supply the necessary assistance to these countries in the framework of the CEF programme.
6. Underlines the important role of research and innovation in the transport and tourism sectors with focus on sustainable urban mobility, social-economic knowledge and environmental performance; therefore appropriate resources should be allocated to these forms of innovative technologies and knowledge under Horizon 2020 and Shift2Rail.
7. Recommends putting greater emphasis on transport policies related to ports and airports, as they promote competitiveness through the further development of a sustainable internal market as well as the opening of Europe to the rest of the world; underlines the need for a rational European policy that enhances specificity, particularly of ports and their geographical location; believes that the improved intermodal connections and interconnectivity should make it possible to facilitate trade with surrounding areas and make our transport system more sustainable; stresses the importance of a European strategy to encourage better and broader connectivity between airports at both national and international level.
8. Points out that Parliament has less of a guarantee of access to official documents concerning the EU budget than the other institutions; calls, therefore, for the interinstitutional agreements to be revised with a view to providing Members of Parliament, who represent European citizens, with proper access to documents, even when these contain 'sensitive' information.
9. Draws attention to the forthcoming adoption of the fourth railway package which provides for the European Railway Agency to have a greater role in terms of certification and marketing authorisation in order to make procedures, timing and resources more efficient; stresses the need to provide the Agency with adequate financial, human and logistical resources to carry out these new tasks; moreover, recalls that this package must form part of a more wide-ranging action plan to enhance the attractiveness of the railway sector; takes the view, therefore, that it is important to invest more in the development of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) with a single European and interoperable standard and to implement without delay the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking.

10. Emphasises that the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) should be equipped with the necessary means for controlling safety and preventing pollution from offshore oil and gas installations, as decided in the Regulation on the financing of EMSA.
11. Draws attention to the crucial role played by the agencies whose main responsibility is to ensure the safety of the various modes of transport; ,therefore rejects the proposed cuts in the operating budgets of the agencies and disagrees with proposed cuts that could undermine transport safety.
12. Underlines the strategic importance of the Single European Sky as the main instrument to ensure safety, environmental performance, competitiveness and protection of the citizens' rights; stresses that the EU should provide sufficient resources for its technology pillar SESAR, via CEF and the research programmes; believes that a number of proposals shortly to be adopted, seeking to enhance the position of European operators in relation to the rest of the world, provide for additional tasks to be allocated to the European Aviation Safety Agency; takes the view, therefore, that the share of its resources from the EU budget should be at least maintained at present levels and not reduced, even though the private sector also participates in its funding.
13. Points out that the financial transparency of agencies needs to be improved, not least as regards the actual tasks which they perform; considers that appointments should be made on the basis of merit and by public procedures, with published selection criteria and ceilings on salaries.
14. Suggests, bearing in mind that there is no direct budgetary line for tourism, continuing to take maximum advantage of the opportunities offered by European Structural and Investment Funds and the COSME programme and by the pilot projects and preparatory actions seeking to enhance the attractiveness to tourists of the 'Old Continent'; stresses that an efficient cross-collaboration between the numerous policies and EU funds concerned is crucial in this field, and should also take into consideration public - private - partnerships (PPPs).
15. Calls for the introduction of a direct budgetary line for Tourism in the EU's Budget for 2016.
16. Expects the Commission to present an annual overview on tourism projects that have been co-financed by different EU funds.
17. Given the financial contribution of the tourism activity to the EU's GDP and its impact on job creation, calls for an increase in the budget for actions in the tourism sector under the COSME programmes in 2016 to EUR 13 million; calls for the avoidance of further cuts in the budget for the actions in the tourism sector in the current multiannual financial framework (MFF).
18. Recommends paying particular attention to urban nodal points in the context of European transport policy; reminds that today more than half of the world population lives in cities, and the trend of this phenomenon is growing; therefore believes that the contribution to efficient, intermodal, sustainable and safe urban mobility systems as wells as, urban and metropolitan areas' connection with rural and remote areas is a solid contribution to global growth.

19. Calls on the Commission to assist the local, regional, national authorities and stakeholders to explore existing and new EU funding opportunities for public transport and to develop innovative public-private partnership schemes; stresses that the European Structural and Investment Funds should be used more systematically for cities that have developed an integrated local transport plan, such as a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), and have identified appropriate actions, in accordance with the criteria in the relevant legislation.
20. Insists that investments in transport infrastructure through the CEF, and research into transport by the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking and the H2020 programme should not serve as an adjustment variable with a view to reaching an agreement on the 2016 budget.
21. Emphasises the role of research and innovation in the transport and tourism sectors both for the development of intelligent transport systems and sustainable and clean power, as well as for better security and improved services for consumers; therefore rejects the proposed cuts for research, in particular for payment appropriations.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	31.8.2015
Result of final vote	+: 35 -: 3 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Lucy Anderson, Inés Ayala Sender, Georges Bach, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Michael Cramer, Andor Deli, Karima Delli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Peter Lundgren, Georg Mayer, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Jens Nilsson, Markus Pieper, Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault D’Allonnes Bonnefoy, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, Claudia Schmidt, Pavel Telička, István Ujhelyi, Peter van Dalen, Wim van de Camp, Janusz Zemke, Roberts Zile
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Dalton, Markus Ferber, Michael Gahler, Georgi Pirinski, Matthijs van Miltenburg
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Eugen Freund, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Piernicola Pedicini, Julia Reda, Kristina Winberg

18.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Budgets

on general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Maria Spyraiki

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers alarming the decrease of payment appropriations under heading 1b to EUR 49 billion (-4% as compared to 2015), and questions with concern whether the amounts proposed in the Draft Budget (DB) 2016 for heading 1b are sufficient to face the current unprecedented level of payments needed because of the backlog under this heading;
2. Notes that according to the Commission's document "Elements for a payment plan to bring the EU budget back onto a sustainable track", the foreseen payment appropriations for heading 1b must also be used to pay the expected backlog at the end of 2015 (EUR 20 billion), and calls on the Commission to make further efforts to reduce delays in payments, stressing that such delays greatly increase the burdens on regional and national authorities, especially where social, economic and financial problems prevail, and have an extremely serious domino effect and impact on recipients and on vulnerable beneficiaries of funding;
3. Recalls that the conclusions of the sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion highlighted the fact that regional disparities had increased since 2008; emphasises the crucial role played by the EU budget in triggering investment, given that, by supplementing public and private financing at national and international level, its leverage effect helps reinforce growth and ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union;
4. Notes that the DB 2016 foresees commitments amounting to EUR 153 500 billion (a 5,3% reduction as compared with 2015) and payment appropriations of EUR 143,5 billion (a 1,6% increase over 2015);

5. Notes that the proposed level of payment appropriations in the DB 2016 stems from a significant increase in payment appropriations for 2014-2020 programmes and a significant decrease for 2007-2013 programmes, although almost 50% of the payments requested in 2016 are still related to the latter;
6. Notes furthermore that it is desirable also to take into account in advance the impact on payments under heading 1b due to the modification of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020;
7. Recalls the need for sufficient resources to ensure, on the one hand, the proper implementation of the programmes, and on the other, their multiannual operation, which together call for appropriate means and measures in order to minimise the risk of recurrence of the backlog of payments; recalls that outstanding payments undermine the credibility and accountability of the Union; requests a long-term solution for the payment backlog, which is a structural problem likely to re-occur if no adequate solution is found; notes, moreover, the increase in administrative expenditure, in spite of earlier assurances that it would be limited to the same level;
8. Calls on the Commission to thoroughly monitor, in close cooperation with the Member States and regions, and to prepare a detailed forecast on the evolution of payments under heading 1b related to the 2014-2020 programming period, using measurable and thus comparable key performance indicators which will account for the efficiency and effectiveness of the budget appropriations;
9. Is concerned that, in certain cases, the Member States will disburse funding quickly to avoid losing funds which have been committed, a procedure which would increase the risk of irregularities and might lead to financial corrections, and that a situation would arise whereby funds which had not been absorbed at the end of the programming period were subject to automatic decommitment;
10. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for a preparatory action under heading 1b, which is open to all Member States, and is intended to finance capacity development and institution-building to support the implementation of reforms identified as priorities in the lifecycle of the macroeconomic surveillance, and calls for further similar initiatives.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 31 -: 6 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Pascal Arimont, José Blanco López, Franc Bogovič, Mercedes Bresso, Steeve Briois, Edward Czesak, Rosa D'Amato, Bill Etheridge, Michela Giuffrida, Krzysztof Hetman, Ivan Jakovčić, Constanze Krehl, Andrew Lewer, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Martina Michels, Andrey Novakov, Younous Omarjee, Demetris Papadakis, Mirosław Piotrowski, Stanislav Polčák, Julia Reid, Liliana Rodrigues, Fernando Ruas, Maria Spyrali, Ruža Tomašić, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Ángela Vallina, Monika Vana, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Derek Vaughan, Joachim Zeller
Substitutes present for the final vote	Petras Auštrevičius, Jan Olbrycht, Maurice Ponga
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Brando Benifei, Andrejs Mamikins, Soraya Post

7.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Jean-Paul Denanot

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Regrets the fact that, given the ceiling imposed by the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for Heading 2, major categories of common agricultural policy (CAP) spending are likely, in practice, to be cut in 2016, including direct payments and market measures, despite overall commitments and payments being up by 2,4 % and 1,6 % respectively;
2. Takes note, in this regard, of the proposed EUR 63,1 billion in commitments (-0,1 % compared with 2015, with the impact of the reprogramming neutralised) and EUR 55,9 billion in payments (-0,2 %) under the Draft Budget (DB) 2016 for Heading 2;
3. Notes that DB 2016 leaves a margin of EUR 1,2 billion under the ceiling for commitments and a margin of EUR 1,1 billion under the sub-ceiling for the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF); insists that the margin remain within Heading 2 to address any possible forthcoming crisis within the agricultural sector; awaits the Commission's Letter of Amendment, expected in October 2015, which should be based on updated information on EAGF funding;
4. Underlines the fact that DB 2016 represents the first year of full implementation of direct payments introduced by Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013; takes note, in this context, of the decrease in the EAGF's budget of 1,4 % in commitments and appropriations, as a result of transfers between the two pillars of the CAP;
5. Notes that under DB 2016, funding for rural development under the EAFRD would see an increase of 2,8 % in commitments and 6,3 % in payments; stresses, however, that the

increase is a logical consequence of the late programming of the new programmes in the period 2014-2020 and the finalisation of the programmes from 2007-2013;

6. Welcomes the measures to bring the level of unpaid commitments under control and considers them a precondition for making a successful start to the 2014-2020 programming period; calls urgently, therefore, on the Council and the Member States to take all necessary steps to cover pending payment claims;
7. Regrets the cuts made to the budget for intervention in the agricultural markets compared with 2015; given that Russia confirmed the extension of its ban on imports until August 2016, calls on the Commission to implement all necessary measures, such as the use of the available margin under ceiling, to support Union farmers, in all agricultural fields, and the food sector hit by the embargo, in particular in the countries adjoining Russia, and takes the view that emergency measures must be extended to countries indirectly affected by the Russian embargo; welcomes the Commission decision whereby the support measures for fruit and vegetable producers hit by the Russian embargo are to be extended with effect from 1 August 2015 and calls for those measures to remain in force for as long as the import ban lasts and for them to be widened to cover all crop and livestock sectors affected; points out that the milk sector requires particular attention because the Russian embargo is adding to the uncertainty for producers by exacerbating the price fall seen since the quota scheme was abolished;
8. Insists on the need to provide funds to compensate for the economic losses suffered by farmers due to market crises and sanitary or phytosanitary crises such as *Xylella fastidiosa*, and reiterates the need to use the available margins under Heading 2 to this effect; insists that compensation for eradication should also cover rehabilitation of agro-ecosystems including the soil, as well as establishing robust biological diversity, especially ensuring genetic diversity of the planting stock that ideally includes resistance to or tolerance of the disease or pest; indeed, considers that one of the aims of any aid granted should be to ensure balanced, biologically diverse agro-ecosystems and landscapes that are less susceptible to future attacks; calls on the Commission and the Council to take all the necessary measures to combat the deterioration of those markets;
9. Calls for additional funding to be earmarked for the olive-growing and olive oil sector to offset losses to farmers caused by the *Xylella fastidiosa* outbreak, to step up prevention measures in Europe, to combat the spread of this devastating disease and to restructure the sector and consolidate scientific research into the pathogen and its carrier;
10. Notes generally that investment is needed to make our agro-ecosystems resilient to climate change and to the establishment and spread of invasive species, notably through biologically diverse farmed landscapes and living, healthy soils that contain predators and beneficial species, allowing for natural regulation of pest populations;
11. Regrets the cuts of EUR 2 million for the school milk programme proposed by the Commission and supported by the Council from EUR 77 million in the 2015 appropriation to EUR 75 million in DB 2016; recalls Parliament's request for an increase of EUR 20 million a year for this scheme; welcomes the small increase proposed by the Commission and supported by the Council in the school fruit scheme to EUR 150 million; stresses that both programmes have proven to be useful within the Member States and underlines their importance given the current crisis and levels of

child malnutrition in the Union; calls on the Council to take into consideration the Parliament's proposals calling for a simplification of the bureaucracy for the Member States in order to increase the efficiency of both schemes;

12. Regrets the Council's proposed cut of €13.8 million to operational funds for producer organisations in the fruit and vegetable sector given their importance in the food supply chain and the current challenges facing the sector;
13. Calls for the school milk and school fruit programmes to be moved to the second pillar of the CAP so that their specific design can be better tailored on the ground to regional specificities and needs and the acceptance and user-friendliness of the programmes thereby increased;
14. Insists that any revenue accruing to the EU budget deriving from the super levy fines shall be earmarked for reinvestment in the dairy sector, and that other assigned revenues from agriculture in 2014/2015 must remain under Heading 2; takes the view that the quota overrun charges levied in 2015, especially in the milk sector, should be used in their entirety for market support and other aid measures for the milk sector; welcomes the Commission's proposal to earmark those revenues to the EAGF;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that funds allocated to the reserve for crises in the agricultural sector in the 2016 budget, which are subsequently left unspent, remain in full under Heading 2 for the following budget year for direct payments to farmers, as provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013;
16. Notes that European agriculture has increasingly been exposed to crises in recent years; calls therefore on the Commission to reconsider the system of contingency funding and to create a new instrument that allows rapid political intervention in the event of a crisis, without burdening the annual direct payments;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to monitor, in a timely way, the price volatility of agricultural products, with a particular focus on the dairy sector, which has adverse effects on farmers' incomes, and to react promptly and effectively when needed, giving farmers directly the option of combating such price volatility;
18. Notes the effects of elimination of the milk quotas and takes the view that preparatory measures are necessary to avoid market imbalances following the abolition of sugar quotas in September 2017;
19. Calls on the Commission to mobilise the agricultural sector crisis reserve in order to implement crisis measures to aid the dairy industry; considers that the aim of such measures should be to help small and medium-sized milk producers, who have been hit hardest since the quota system was abolished in 2015, and that expenditure should be earmarked for technological improvement of production processes and incentives to produce added value products;
20. Welcomes the level of funds allocated to support beekeeping, as Parliament has consistently viewed beekeeping and the conservation of functional biodiversity, in particular pollinators and the services they provide, as priorities for the future of agriculture;

21. Highlights the objectives of increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of European agriculture, and asks for resources to be provided in order to fulfil these objectives; recalls the potential of agriculture policy in terms of job creation, technical and social innovation and sustainable development, particularly in the rural areas where they promote regional development;
22. Underscores the importance of developing new markets for maintaining competitiveness and increasing the resistance of European agriculture to market crises such as in the case of Russia embargo; calls for the financial support of market development, inter alia through the use of funds from the superlevy;
23. Stresses that it is essential that funds earmarked for research in the agri-food sector, in particular from the Horizon 2020 budget, remain fully available as such in order to stimulate innovation in the agricultural sector;
24. Recalls the difficulties encountered in previous financial years when appropriations were cut; believes that any attempt to reduce agricultural appropriations would be ineffective and even dangerous, since this would undermine CAP objectives, leaving the sector even more vulnerable, and significantly weaken efforts to improve the competitiveness of European agriculture.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 30 -: 4 0: 8
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Eric Andrieu, Daniel Buda, Nicola Caputo, Matt Carthy, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Diane Dodds, Norbert Erdős, Edouard Ferrand, Luke Ming Flanagan, Beata Gosiewska, Martin Häusling, Anja Hazekamp, Jan Huitema, Peter Jahr, Jarosław Kalinowski, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Philippe Loiseau, Mairead McGuinness, Giulia Moi, Ulrike Müller, Maria Noichl, Marit Paulsen, Marijana Petir, Bronis Ropé, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Marc Tarabella, Janusz Wojciechowski, Marco Zullo
Substitutes present for the final vote	Bas Belder, Angélique Delahaye, Jean-Paul Denanot, Jørn Dohrmann, Georgios Epitideios, Fredrick Federley, Jens Gieseke, Maria Heubuch, Karin Kadenbach, Norbert Lins, Susanne Melior, Stanislav Polčák, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Hannu Takkula, Vladimir Urutchev
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Heinz K. Becker, Carlos Iturgaiz, Igor Šoltes

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Alain Cadec

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

General overview

1. Points out how important it is that the EU budget reflects the stated policy objectives for employment, businesses and entrepreneurship; stresses that fisheries and maritime affairs are also areas where jobs are created and growth is generated and that they contribute actively to regional development and natural-resource management;
2. Points out that there is a major economic, social and environmental dimension to fisheries and maritime affairs and that they play a vital role in the blue economy;
3. Is concerned at the situation in the fisheries sector, which must maintain its competitiveness while complying with the demands of the common fisheries policy (CFP) and the requirements of sound fishery resource management under arrangements to manage stocks above the biomass levels at which the maximum sustainable yield can be achieved; is concerned at the industry's and national authorities' difficulties in meeting the landing obligation;
4. Designates youth employment in this sector a political priority; stresses that it is the responsibility of Member States to do their utmost to make it easier for young people to take up the various occupations within fishing by making use of all tools made available to them, including the Structural Funds;

Council position

5. Deplores the fact that, in Title 11 of Section III, the Council has reduced commitment appropriations by EUR 750 388 and payment appropriations by EUR 4 646 986;

6. Expresses its concern about the Council's reading of the budget for 2016, which fails to take into account the political commitments in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and reduces certain appropriations which are vital to the implementation of the CFP; calls, accordingly, for the appropriations for Title 11 of Section III of the Commission's Draft Budget to be reinstated;

Commitment appropriations under Title 11 of Section III

7. Notes the commitment appropriations proposed by the Commission for the 2016 budget; notes the amount entered, EUR 1 047 031 838, which comes under heading 2 of the MFF; notes the 41,1 % reduction compared to the previous financial year; notes that the bulk of that EUR 729 120 330 reduction comes from the 2014 appropriations carried forward to 2015 as a result of the technical revision of the MFF and the scheduling delay affecting the Structural Funds, including the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
8. Points out that appropriations for the 2015 financial year have been increased by EUR 740 725 000 because of unused 2014 appropriations;
9. Observes that the reduction in the draft budget is mainly accounted for by appropriations for the EMFF, i.e., a reduction of EUR 728 588 330 compared to the 2015 financial year; takes the view, however, that commitment appropriations are in line with the political decisions taken during the EMFF negotiations and with MFF ceilings;
10. Notes the EUR 150 500 000 in commitment appropriations allocated, in the draft budget, for Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), which is 0,4 % down on 2015; takes the view, however, factoring in assumptions as regards inflation, that this stagnation in the level of appropriations is a real reduction;
11. Notes the EUR 36 056 336 in heading 5 commitment appropriations to cover administrative expenditure under Title 11 of Section III, which represents a reduction of EUR 139 563 and reflects the effort being made to scale back the Commission's administrative spending; welcomes, in this regard, the exemplary conduct demonstrated by the Commission in reducing its administrative expenditure;

Payment appropriations under Title 11 of Section III

12. Notes the payment appropriations proposed by the Commission for the 2016 budget; notes the amount entered, EUR 720 647 758, under heading 2 of the MFF, which is 24,9 % down on the previous financial year; notes that the bulk of that EUR 238 621 588 reduction is accounted for by an increase on 2015 appropriations to meet European Fisheries Fund (EFF) payment requests;
13. Observes that that reduction is being borne solely by the structural-fund budget lines; states that the reduction was foreseeable and that the amounts entered in the 2016 draft budget are in line with needs;

14. Notes the EUR 150 000 000 in payments requested for SFPAs and in compulsory contributions to RFMOs, which represents a slight increase of 0,3 % (largely cancelled out by inflation);
15. Notes the heading 5 payment appropriations, identical in volume to commitment appropriations, to cover administrative expenditure under Title 2 of Section III;

Administrative expenditure and establishment plan

16. Points up the cost-cutting efforts made by the Commission in reducing its administrative expenditure; cautions the Council against making any attempt to reduce that expenditure, since, if that were done, the ability of DG MARE to carry out all its tasks properly would be significantly compromised;
17. Notes that DG MARE's establishment plan is in line with the objective of an annual 1 % reduction in posts, account being taken of redeployment; notes that the work to be carried out by DG MARE will not be significantly hampered as a result of the projections for 2016 (even though they are down);
18. Welcomes the cooperation on human resources between DG MARE and the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), the latter carrying out a number of EMFF actions, including in connection with the integrated maritime policy, control, and scientific advice and knowledge; calls on the Commission to deepen that constructive cooperation;
19. Calls on the Council to keep heading 2 and 5 administrative appropriations at the levels requested in the draft budget;

External dimension of the CFP

20. Considers that the appropriations allocated to SPAs should be treated as non-differentiated appropriations, since, after validation, a budgetary commitment gives rise to a payment for the same amount;
21. Calls on DG MARE to carry out precise monitoring of sectoral aid, with detailed charts, in line with the indicators put forward in the programme statements;
22. Takes the view that the volume of appropriations requested by the Commission is sufficient and necessary to achieve the ambitious objectives relating to the CFP's external dimension;

European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

23. Notes the appropriations earmarked for the EFCA; regrets the loss of one post on the establishment plan; proposes therefore that the budget of the EFCA be increased so as to enable it to carry out the new tasks arising from the new Basic Regulation on the CFP; considers that the proposed increase should cover the costs incurred in respect of staff, operations and IT support;
24. Calls on the Council and Commission to resume dialogue on appropriations for EU agencies in the context of the revision of the CFP;

EMFF

25. Points out that the deadline for eligibility of expenditure incurred by EFF beneficiaries is 31 December 2015; considers that, in 2016, Member States will apply for reimbursement of some of that expenditure; notes the EFF payment appropriations requested in the draft budget; considers that they ought to be sufficient;
26. Urges the Member States concerned to do their utmost to ensure that all operational programmes as referred to in Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the EMFF Regulation are validated by 31 December 2015 at the latest; takes the view that the amounts entered in the draft budget against Articles 11 06 60, 11 06 61, 11 06 62 and 11 06 63 are in line with needs, with the exception, however, of heading 11 06 62 01 on scientific advice and knowledge, the drastic reduction of payments for which, particularly in comparison with 2015, seems unjustified, and that the amounts should therefore be reinstated at the 2015 levels;

Transparency

27. Insists that the Commission forward immediately to Parliament, and subsequently every year, a progress board covering all commitments and payments, broken down by Member State, so as to ensure compliance with the various EMFF ceilings;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions

28. Supports all current pilot projects and preparatory actions related to fisheries, which should be adequately funded so that they can be completed; notes the requests for payment appropriations for the projects and actions under Items 11 06 77 03, 11 06 77 06, 11 06 77 07, 11 06 77 08 and 11 06 77 09; calls on the Council to take into consideration the new pilot projects backed by Parliament.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.9.2015
Result of final vote	+ : 14 - : 4 0 : 3
Members present for the final vote	Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Renata Briano, Alain Cadec, Richard Corbett, Diane Dodds, Raymond Finch, Ian Hudghton, Carlos Iturgaiz, Werner Kuhn, António Marinho e Pinto, Gabriel Mato, Liadh Ní Riada, Ulrike Rodust, Remo Sernagiotto, Ricardo Serrão Santos, Isabelle Thomas
Substitutes present for the final vote	José Blanco López, Ian Duncan, Anja Hazekamp, Francisco José Millán Mon
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Enrique Calvet Chambon, Axel Voss

16.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's Draft General Budget 2016 proposes to step up Union support for an emblematic mobility programme such as Erasmus+, which is consistent with the Commission's commitment to increasing student mobility from the current 10% to 20% by the end of the decade;
2. Recalls the strong support consistently given by Parliament to adequate funding for culture and media programmes, given their important role in supporting cultural and creative industries; welcomes, therefore, the increase for the Creative Europe Programme, including multimedia actions, compared to the 2015 budget, while expressing reservations regarding the administrative division between its Culture and Media strands; regrets, however, the Council's decreased funding for this programme, as it could give the impression to Union citizens that it underestimates the value of culture as an engine for economic growth and personal development;
3. Strongly supports the proposed increase for 'Europe for Citizens'; finds that the decrease in commitments and payments proposed by the Council is politically unjustified, as this programme is vital to civic participation in the democratic process in Europe and is a central instrument for participatory democracy in the Union;
4. Deeply regrets the fact that in Heading 3 the programmes involving culture and citizenship, such as 'Creative Europe' and 'Europe for Citizens' have had their budget reduced proportionally more than others in terms of both commitments and payments;
5. Points out that since the launch of the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCSGF) in the framework of the 'Creative Europe' programme is planned for 2016,

the fund needs to be allocated enough money in the first year of implementation to secure an effective start;

6. Recalls that investments in education, training, cultural and creative industries, as well as in research, should be included in the EFSI as they are a key factor for social inclusion which, at a later stage, will translate into investment decisions and sustainable economic growth, and – in the long run – competitiveness;
7. Highlights the positive role of pan-European networks made up of local and national media such as Euranet Plus and calls for a budgetary increase to ensure the ongoing activities and to consolidate a stable framework of financing for the future for Euranet Plus;
8. Points out with concern that the Commission has made no provision for a margin for further reinforcements or Pilot Projects (PPs) and Preparatory Actions (PAs) under Heading 3, nor even for the continuation of highly successful PP-PAs; stresses the importance of PP-PAs as tools for the formulation of political priorities and the introduction of new initiatives that might turn into standing Union activities and programmes and calls for an exploration of ways in which to make room for possible PP-PAs in Heading 3;
9. Points out, in general, that decreased funding to European programmes in the fields of culture and education, and the delays in the finalisation of contracts and in payments between authorities and beneficiaries, endanger the full implementation of the programmes by the Commission and undermine the citizens' trust and the credibility of Institutions of the Union.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	15.9.2015
Result of final vote	+ : 17 - : 4 0 : 1
Members present for the final vote	Dominique Bilde, Andrea Bocskor, Silvia Costa, Angel Dzhambazki, Jill Evans, Petra Kammerevert, Rikke Karlsson, Andrew Lewer, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Fernando Maura Barandiarán, Luigi Morgano, Yana Toom, Helga Trüpel, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Sylvie Guillaume, Dietmar Köster, Paul Nuttall, Hermann Winkler

4.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Péter Niedermüller

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the increase in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) by 31,2 % in commitments and 35 % in payments compared with 2015; considers that this increase adds to the need to ensure a fair and transparent distribution of funding between the different objectives of AMIF; believes that EU funding for reception and integration of migrants and asylum seekers should be substantially increased, as opposed to the priority which is given today to border control and other costly security measures, such as administrative detention, which have not shown their effectiveness and often contravene the rights of migrants; calls on the Commission to primarily allocate additional resources for earmarked specific actions to Member States that volunteer for actions geared towards reception and integration of migrants and asylum seekers; considers it necessary to establish separate budget lines covering the four specific objectives of AMIF and one new budget line for the urgent relocation mechanism;
2. Considers that the current refugee crisis shows the need to create significant budgetary room and readiness in the 2016 budget, enabling swifter and more substantial support for Member States where most arrivals take place as well as to support Member States as regards the reception and integration of refugees;
3. Welcomes the increase of ISF as border protection and security are key issues for the Union, including enhancing security agenda and European Counter Terrorist Centre;
4. Is of the opinion that, instead of the current *ad-hoc* decision-making, a more long-term

approach to search and rescue operations is necessary; proposes, therefore, a new budget line for an EU Search and Rescue Fund to cover such operations;

5. Supports the proposal to mobilise the flexibility instrument to finance part of the urgent relocation mechanism but considers that the ceiling for Heading 3 must be increased further to enable the EU to fulfil its obligations in the area of asylum and migration; calls on the Commission in this context to revise the MFF during the midterm review in 2017;
6. Considers it necessary to increase the appropriations of all the agencies in the Justice and Home Affairs field given the particular challenges in this policy area and the ever increasing tasks for these agencies; recalls that these agencies are called to undertake new tasks related to the refugee relocation and resettlement mechanisms, search and rescue activities at sea, the implementation of the Common European Asylum System, recent decisions and strategies aimed at fighting terrorism and organised crime including cybercrime as well as the smuggling of migrants; considers that Frontex, Europol, EASO and Eurojust require more staff than proposed by the Commission;
7. Welcomes the proposed increase for Frontex as it allows for the extension of the Triton and Poseidon operations; proposes the creation of a separate budget line for those Frontex joint operations to increase their transparency;
8. Believes that a coherent European response to search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean must be independent from border management and control missions, and designed as a stand-alone mission; proposes therefore a new budget line for an EU Search and Rescue Fund to reinforce and support the search and rescue operations of Member States;
9. Stresses that the budgetary impact of the measures presented as part of the European Agenda on Security, in particular with regard to Europol and its related tasks in the fields of anti-terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime, should be further explained and detailed by the Commission; underlines the need to ensure an appropriate budget and level of staffing for Europol for 2016, to allow it to effectively fulfil its tasks, in particular as regards the new European Counter Terrorist Centre to be set up within Europol;
10. Calls on the Commission to increase funding for preventive actions and measures against violent radicalisation, as part of the European Agenda on Security, in particular through the Radicalisation Awareness Network and its forthcoming Centre of Excellence; reiterates the importance of such measures to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism;
11. Calls for strengthening EMCDDA in view of the envisaged adoption of the regulation on new psychoactive substances conferring additional tasks on EMCDDA;
12. Emphasises the need to increase the budget for anti-discrimination and equality policies; calls for specific funding to be allocated to tackle growing antisemitism, islamophobia, afrophobia and antiromism in Member States; calls in particular for the Union to support projects aiming at the empowerment of women and girls from the communities concerned.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 38 -: 6 0: 7
Members present for the final vote	Gerard Batten, Heinz K. Becker, Malin Björk, Caterina Chinnici, Ignazio Corrao, Frank Engel, Cornelia Ernst, Laura Ferrara, Monika Flašíková Beňová, Mariya Gabriel, Kinga Gál, Nathalie Griesbeck, Sylvie Guillaume, Brice Hortefeux, Filiz Hyusmenova, Sophia in 't Veld, Eva Joly, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, Timothy Kirkhope, Barbara Kudrycka, Marju Lauristin, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Monica Macovei, Vicky Maeijer, Louis Michel, Claude Moraes, József Nagy, Péter Niedermüller, Soraya Post, Birgit Sippel, Csaba Sógor, Traian Ungureanu, Bodil Valero, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Udo Voigt, Beatrix von Storch, Josef Weidenholzer, Cecilia Wikström, Kristina Winberg, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes present for the final vote	Marina Albiol Guzmán, Hugues Bayet, Pál Csáky, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Ska Keller, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Andrejs Mamikins, Elly Schlein, Josep-Maria Terricabras, Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski, Axel Voss

10.7.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Budgets

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Danuta Maria Hübner

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission's proposed increase in appropriations for Heading 3 of 9,75 % in commitment appropriations and 17,1 % in payment appropriations as compared to the 2015 budget; notes that this increase is not unexpected, as it merely reflects the new needs of the multiannual programmes which are entering the phase of full-speed implementation; notes that the Commission does not leave any margin for unexpected needs in Heading 3 and proposes the mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument for EUR 124 million in order to respond to the current asylum and migration crisis;
2. Welcomes in particular the proposed increase in the 'Europe for Citizens' programme of 4,1 % in commitment appropriations and 30 % in payment appropriations as compared to the 2015 budget, as this programme is vital to civic participation in the democratic process in Europe;
3. Is pleased to see additional financing for communication actions amounting to an increase of 8,9 % in commitment appropriations and 11,28 % in payment appropriations as compared to the 2015 budget, as this includes the actions the Commission is launching to reach out to European citizens, gain their trust and foster their understanding of Union politics and policies;
4. Warns the Council against any unjustified cuts in the areas of citizenship and communication, as these programmes are vital to establishing a relationship with European citizens based on understanding and trust;

5. Regards the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) as a central instrument for participatory democracy in the EU and considers it regrettable that European citizens are still facing significant hurdles in exercising their right to launch such an initiative; insists that the visibility of this instrument be improved by placing it on a separate budgetary line under the line of 'Europe for citizens' and equipping it, together with its underlying communication strategy, with sufficient funding to meet its objectives and to facilitate citizens' access to this valuable tool of participatory democracy;
6. Insists, with regard to Parliament's budget, that sufficient funding be ensured for communication programmes promoting interaction with citizens and informing them of Parliament's activities, and that information exchange measures with national parliaments be strengthened.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	6.7.2015
Result of final vote	+ : 18 - : 2 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	Mercedes Bresso, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Pascal Durand, Danuta Maria Hübner, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Constance Le Grip, Jo Leinen, Morten Messerschmidt, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Paulo Rangel, György Schöpflin, Pedro Silva Pereira, Claudia Tapardel, Josep-Maria Terricabras
Substitutes present for the final vote	Gerolf Annemans, Pervenche Berès, Andrej Plenković, Cristian Dan Preda, Viviane Reding, Helmut Scholz
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Ashley Fox

16.9.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016
(2015/2132(BUD))

Rapporteur: Barbara Matera

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls the Joint Declaration of the three institutions that the annual budgetary procedures applied for the MFF 2014-2020 will integrate, as appropriate, gender-responsive elements; emphasises that gender equality should be included as a horizontal principle in all Union policies and gender analysis and gender budgeting should become an integral part of the budgetary procedure at all its stages, including projects, definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; calls therefore for a comprehensive implementation of gender budgeting, which includes assessment by the Court of Auditors of the general budget of the Union from a gender perspective;
2. Calls for the adoption of 'gender budgeting' in European strategies for more effective promotion of gender equality; highlights the need to earmark increased funding for the fight against all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls;
3. Emphasises that in order to boost jobs, growth and investment, which is a key priority of the 2016 draft budget, special attention has to be paid to the empowerment of women in business, science, education and labour markets in order to make greater use of the existing skills and expertise, while achieving equality between women and men with special regard to the still existing gender pay gap; repeats its call to use the European Structural and Investment Funds as well as the European Fund for Strategic Investment to achieve this objective;
4. Stresses that with regard to the under-representation of women among entrepreneurs, in all schemes aiming to support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, special attention should be paid to women; access to finance including microfinance for female entrepreneurs must be facilitated;

5. Underlines the importance of fighting the youth unemployment in Europe by allocating additional resources to the Youth Employment Initiative; stresses the need to support under the Initiative young women who can face gender-specific obstacles to get good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship;
6. Calls for resources to be allocated from Union funds to encourage female scientists and researchers to start and continue their careers and thus help to increase the participation of women in this sector;
7. Calls for resources to be allocated from Union funds to promote women's rights and gender equality;
8. Reiterates its call to keep the profile of the Daphne programme visible as much as possible; notes that the programme statement for the programme Rights, Equality and Citizenship does not mention the name Daphne; calls for an increase in the relative share of the financial resources allocated for the output of the Daphne specific objective within the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme;
9. Asks the European Commission to work on ensuring transparent information on the actions selected for funding in order to allow for a proper scrutiny of the implementation of the specific objective of preventing and combatting violence;
10. Calls for genuine budgetary transparency in respect of the funds (ESF, PROGRESS, DAPHNE) allocated to gender equality policies;
11. Repeats its call to create the European Monitoring Centre on Gender Violence within the European Institute on Gender Equality (EIGE) and, to this end, increase its staff establishment plan by one post, including a respective increase in the budget of EIGE.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	15.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: 5 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Maria Arena, Catherine Bearder, Malin Björk, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Mary Honeyball, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Barbara Matera, Krisztina Morvai, Angelika Niebler, Maria Noichl, Margot Parker, Marijana Petir, Terry Reintke, Liliana Rodrigues, Jordi Sebastià, Ángela Vallina, Beatrix von Storch, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Anna Záborská, Jana Žitňanská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Biljana Borzan, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Sylvie Goddyn, Constance Le Grip
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Michel Reimon

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	13.10.2015
Result of final vote	+: 24 -: 7 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Jean Arthuis, Reimer Böge, Lefteris Christoforou, Jean-Paul Denanot, Gérard Deprez, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Jens Geier, Esteban González Pons, Ingeborg Gräßle, Monika Hohlmeier, Bernd Kölmel, Vladimír Maňka, Ernest Maragall, Clare Moody, Siegfried Mureşan, Younous Omarjee, Paul Rübig, Patricija Šulin, Eleftherios Synadinos, Paul Tang, Indrek Tarand, Isabelle Thomas, Inese Vaidere, Daniele Viotti, Marco Zanni
Substitutes present for the final vote	Michał Marusik, Louis Michel, Andrey Novakov, Stanisław Ożóg, Marco Valli, Derek Vaughan, Anders Primdahl Vistisen, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Massimo Paolucci