



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2013/2145(BUD)

6.9.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgets

on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 - all sections
(2013/2145(BUD))

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Deplores the substantive cuts of 12.5% in commitment appropriations and a cut of 8.2% in payment appropriations compared with the 2013 budget for Heading 4; emphasises that even in times of increased budgetary discipline and constraints, it is of vital importance to maintain appropriate funding for the EU's global activities to enable it to live up to its ambitions outlined in the Lisbon treaty; stresses that all efforts should be made to limit the deep cuts and their repercussions for the EU as a global actor;
2. Notes that the provisions of the 2014 Draft Budget do not match the initial ambitions of the proposal of the European Commission for the MFF 2014-2020 in order to make the EU a relevant global actor;
3. Considers, in this regard, of utmost importance to enhance cooperation, step up coordination and develop synergies with programmes and projects of EU Member States in third countries in order to improve the effectiveness of EU external action and cope with current budgetary restraints;
4. Emphasises thus the importance of trying to as far as possible match the level of the 2013 budget in terms of commitments to the EU's major foreign policy financial instruments to ensure that the EU's international role is not unnecessarily weakened;
5. Regrets the especially severe reductions applied to the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which could considerably endanger relations with the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, one of the main priorities of the EU's external action; stresses that without adequate funding, the 'more for more' principle as core mechanism in the relevant financial instruments will be fundamentally undermined; strongly urges to restore a substantial amount of the cuts in commitments to the ENI, also taking into consideration civil society;
6. Emphasises that in the Southern Mediterranean, there is an urgent need for the EU to play an active role and that it is in the EU's interest to pursue closer cooperation and support further democratic developments, conflict resolution activities, as well as the legal approximation with the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood in particular with regards to the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius; expresses its concern that with deep cuts in the relevant instruments, there would be little room to react to sudden developments and maintain the level of support required to help countries in transition which could fundamentally undermine the EU's policy objectives in the area; expresses the need to further support the efforts of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean to develop concrete socioeconomic projects of regional scope;
7. Stresses that the expectations and the objectives of the Eastern Partnership Vilnius summit will need an effective follow-up and calls, therefore, for adequate financial support that enables the Union to deliver on its promises;

8. Regrets that the distribution of the decreases in commitments among the different instruments remains largely unexplained which is especially disconcerting given the enormous differences in the depth of the cuts; asks the Commission to provide further clarification on the reasons for this distribution of cuts;
9. Notes that the margin for Heading 4 has been reduced this year and leaves less room for flexibility with regard to policy priorities; believes that such thin margins can limit Parliament's role in the budget negotiations;
10. Stresses that the search for peace and political stability in the Middle East plays a key role in the EU's foreign policy; reiterates therefore its call for long term programming and sufficient funding for assistance to UNRWA, Palestine and the Peace process;
11. Is of the opinion that, for the sake of transparency and efficiency of aid, the policy of direct budget support should be evaluated critically and that the level of auditing should be improved; stresses that in cases of fraud and misuse, the EU should cancel financial aid;
12. Questions whether the level of payments for the Emergency Aid Reserve will be sufficient to ensure the EU's capacity to respond rapidly to any urgent crisis;
13. Welcomes the savings the European External Action Service (EEAS) has been able to make in its budget but notes with concern rising costs and suggests steps should be taken towards the purchase of delegation buildings where economically sensible; similarly welcomes attempts made to reduce the number of senior level posts but emphasises that the efforts made so far are still insufficient; continues to believe that the special situation of the EEAS requires a partial exemption from the strict savings goals imposed on other institutions; urges in line with its recommendation on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS to carry out a systematic and in-depth audit to overcome current duplications with EU external policy-related structures of the Commission and Council Secretariat, which could result in considerable administrative cost-savings;
14. Stresses that in line with the recommendations contained in the EEAS Review, EU Special Representatives should be an intrinsic part of the EEAS in accordance with Article 33 TEU; proposes a 40% cut in the budget line for EUSRs pending an agreement with the Council on the transfer of this budget line to the EEAS budget.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	4.9.2013
Result of final vote	+: 48 -: 5 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Sir Robert Atkins, Bastiaan Belder, Elmar Brok, Tarja Cronberg, Mário David, Susy De Martini, Michael Gahler, Marietta Giannakou, Ana Gomes, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Anna Ibrisagic, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Evgeni Kirilov, Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, Eduard Kukan, Krzysztof Lisek, Marusya Lyubcheva, Willy Meyer, Francisco José Millán Mon, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Raimon Obiols, Kristiina Ojula, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Tonino Picula, Mirosław Piotrowski, Cristian Dan Preda, Libor Rouček, Tokia Saïfi, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Nikolaos Salavrakos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Werner Schulz, Davor Ivo Stier, Charles Tannock, Eleni Theoharous, Geoffrey Van Orden, Nikola Vuljanić, Sir Graham Watson, Karim Zérubi
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Göran Färm, Roberto Gualtieri, Elisabeth Jeggle, Emilio Menéndez del Valle, Doris Pack, Jean Roatta, Marietje Schaake, Alf Svensson, Janusz Władysław Zemke
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Dubravka Šuica