



2019/2028(BUD)

24.7.2019

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020
(2019/2028(BUD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Michael Gahler

PA_NonLeg

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. Notes with concern the decrease of over EUR 1 billion in commitment appropriations for Heading 4 (Global Europe), which would result in a budget for external action lower than during any of the three preceding years; believes that in the current international context, the EU needs to assume more, not less responsibility and that it must be endowed with the necessary financial resources in order to be able to do so; calls for the margin of over EUR 200 million in Heading 4 to be allocated;
2. Believes that a further increase in funding for the Western Balkan countries under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) is needed; in this regard, disapproves of the proposed reduction of the funds dedicated to supporting political reforms and alignment with the *acquis* in the Western Balkans and asks for a substantial increase instead;
3. Notes that the allocations for Turkey remain at a reduced level and believes that this is justified by the serious and persistent deficits in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in Turkey; welcomes the increased focus on support for civil society and the continuing shift toward direct management and encourages the Commission to further expedite this rebalancing;
4. Calls for reversing the proposed budget cuts for the countries in the Southern Neighbourhood under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI); reiterates that contributions from ENI to the Syria pledge and the EU Trust Fund for Africa must not come at the expense of the ENI core priorities and calls for these additional commitments to be fully offset by reinforcements;
5. Reiterates its view that the funding of the administrative and operating expenditures of the European Defence Agency and of permanent structured cooperation from the Union budget is the only option under the Treaties.