



Committee on Budgets

2015/2341(INI)

26.4.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Development

on the EU Trust Fund for Africa: the implications for development and humanitarian aid
(2015/2341(INI))

Rapporteur (*): Eider Gardiazabal Rubial

(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

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SUGGESTIONS

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

The budgetary aspects of the Trust Fund for Africa

1. Welcomes the intention to disburse funds more quickly and flexibly in an emergency situation, and to bring together various sources of funding in order to address the migration and refugee crisis in its multiple dimensions; criticises the fact that the Commission has diverted appropriations from the objectives and principles of the basic acts to channel them through the trust fund, as this is in breach of the financial rules and furthermore risks the success of long-term Union policies; considers that such a fund should add value to the existing sources of funding; calls, therefore, for fresh appropriations to be used wherever possible and for full transparency as to the origin and destination of funds to be ensured;
2. Stresses the importance of providing a better balance of funding for recipient country governments and especially for reliable civil society actors, who tend to be more aware of societal deficiencies which are in need of support;
3. Acknowledges the added value of pooling a large number of national contributions at Union level in addition to substantial contributions from the external financing instruments and the European Development Fund (EDF); deplores the fact that the financial pledges made by Member States so far amount only to a small fraction of the Union contribution, totalling only EUR 81.71 million in April 2016 (or 4.5 % of the projected EUR 1.8 billion); stresses that the volatility of voluntary contributions shows that the recourse to funding instruments outside the EU budget is not a viable way to mobilise additional funding; urges the Member States to honour their pledges and to rapidly and effectively match the Union contribution in order to allow the trust fund to develop its full potential rather than provide the minimum required to obtain voting rights on the Strategic Board;
4. Notes that trust funds are part of an ad hoc response which shows that the Union budget and the Multiannual Financial Framework lack the resources and flexibility needed for a rapid and comprehensive approach to major crises; deplores the fact that they result in bypassing the budgetary authority and undermining the unity of the budget; notes that the fact that this ad hoc instrument has been set up is acknowledgement that the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework is undersized; points out that Member State contributions make up 85 % of the Union budget; considers that setting up this trust fund is de facto tantamount to revising the ceilings for the current Multiannual Financial Framework by increasing Member State contributions; stresses, therefore, that the creation of funding instruments outside the EU budget must remain exceptional as it bypasses the budgetary authority and undermines budget unity; deplores the fact that Parliament is not represented on the Strategic Board, despite the fact that substantial funds come from the Union budget; calls for the budgetary authority to be invited to participate in the Strategic Board;

5. Strongly believes that a more holistic solution for emergency funding should be found in the MFF review/revision; calls, in particular, for an adequate revision of the ceiling to allow for the inclusion of the crisis mechanisms in the MFF in order to restore the unity of the budget; considers that revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework would provide greater budgetary, democratic and legal certainty; stresses, moreover, the need to review the financial rules with a view to facilitating the management of EU budget funds and to achieving, as part of an integrated approach, greater synergies between the Union budget, the EDF and bilateral cooperation so as to increase the impact of development funding and to pave the way for the budgetisation of the EDF, while maintaining the current level of resources, foreseen as of 2021; urges the Commission to take immediate steps to improve the involvement of the budgetary authority and to better align the trust funds and other mechanisms with the budgetary norm, notably by making them appear in the Union budget;
6. Observes that Parliament has demonstrated responsibility, as one arm of the budgetary authority, by agreeing to release emergency funds; deplores the fact, however, that, as a result of the proliferation of emergency instruments, the Community method is being abandoned; gives an assurance of its intention to safeguard the fundamental principles of the Union budget, notably budget unity and codecision; considers that a rethink of the Union's ability to respond to large-scale crises, in particular as regards their budgetary implications, is what is genuinely imperative; makes its agreement to future proposals for crisis instruments subject to incorporation of those implications into the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework, which is scheduled to take place before the end of 2016;
7. Note that the Trust Fund for Africa was created following the Valetta Summit of African and European Heads of States or Governments on migration issues; calls on the Commission to provide the European Parliament with an overview of the concrete actions that followed this summit, notably in the field of development, the fight against smugglers and the signature of return, readmission and reintegration agreements; calls on the Council to provide the Commission with the necessary mandates to conclude such agreements with the countries concerned by the Trust Fund.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	26.4.2016
Result of final vote	+: 25 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Nedzhmi Ali, Jean Arthuis, Jean-Paul Denanot, Gérard Deprez, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Bernd Kölmel, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Vladimír Maňka, Ernest Maragall, Sophie Montel, Clare Moody, Siegfried Mureşan, Liadh Ní Riada, Jan Olbrycht, Younous Omarjee, Paul Rübig, Petri Sarvamaa, Indrek Tarand, Inese Vaidere, Monika Vana, Daniele Viotti, Patricija Šulin
Substitutes present for the final vote	Andrey Novakov, Derek Vaughan, Anders Primdahl Vistisen, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Jens Gieseke