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DRAFT REPORT

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019
(11737/2018 – C8-0410/2018 – 2018/2046(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 2019 (11737/2018 – C8-0410/2018 – 2018/2046(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 2014/335/EU, Euratom of 26 May 2014 on the system of own resources of the European Union¹,
- 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 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU, and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012³,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020⁴ (the “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 management⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 March 2018 on general guidelines for the preparation of the budget⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 April 2018 on Parliament’s estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2019⁷,
- having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019, which the Commission adopted on 21 June 2018 (COM(2018)0600),

¹ OJ L 168, 7.6.2014, p. 105.

² OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

³ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁵ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁶ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2018)0089.

⁷ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2018)0182.

- having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019, which the Council adopted on 4 September 2018 and forwarded to Parliament on 14 September 2018 (11737/2018 – C8-0410/2018),
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2018 on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2019 draft budget¹,
- 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 (A8-0000/2018),

Section III

General overview

1. Stresses that Parliament's reading of the 2019 Budget fully reflects the political priorities adopted by an overwhelming majority in its abovementioned resolutions of 15 March 2018 on general guidelines and of 5 July 2018 on a mandate for the trilogue; recalls that at the core of those priorities are: sustainable growth, innovation, competitiveness, security, the fight against climate change and the transition to renewable energy and migration, and a particular focus on young people;
2. Highlights that the Union continues to face numerous challenges and is convinced that, especially ahead of the UK withdrawal from the Union and the 2019 European elections, Union citizens expect the necessary financial resources to be deployed from the Union budget, in order to allow the Union to effectively respond to the abovementioned challenges and improve the day-to-day life of its citizens;
3. Points out that Europe's citizens expect the Union to strain every sinew to ensure economic growth and foster job creation; recalls that meeting those expectations requires investments in research and innovation, education, infrastructure, SMEs and employment, particularly among the young people of Europe, and that any failure in that regard will foster disillusionment with the European ideal; expresses wonderment that the Council yet again proposes cuts to the very programmes that are designed to make the Union economy more competitive and innovative; stresses moreover that many of these programmes, for example Horizon 2020, are heavily oversubscribed, which constitutes a poor use resources and means that many excellent projects do not receive funding; highlights also the fact that programmes such as Erasmus +, Horizon 2020 and the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) provide a vivid demonstration of the advantages of working together across the Union and help create a feeling of European belonging; decides therefore to reinforce considerably Erasmus + and to strengthen programmes that contribute to growth and job creation, including Horizon 2020, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and COSME;
4. Reiterates its commitment to its pledges made during the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) negotiations, namely to minimise the impact of EFSI-related cuts on

¹ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2018)0311.

Horizon 2020 and CEF in the framework of the annual budgetary procedure; proposes, therefore, to offset those cuts by restoring the original annual profile of those two programmes, in order to allow them to fully accomplish the objectives agreed during the adoption of the relevant legislation;

5. Highlights that youth unemployment remains unacceptably high in certain Member States and that the situation of young people in NEET (not in education, employment or training) situations and the long-term unemployed is particularly worrying; stresses that young people are the most at risk of poverty and social and economic exclusion; decides therefore to reinforce the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) beyond the level proposed by the Commission; stresses that such reinforcement should in no way be seen as a frontloading of the YEI allocation endorsed in the context of the MFF mid-term revision;
6. Recalls that cohesion policy plays a primary role in the development and growth of the Union; emphasises Parliament's commitment to ensuring adequate appropriations for those programmes that represent one of the core policies of the Union;
7. Regrets that, under current projections, only 19,3 % of the Union budget 2014 – 2020 would be devoted to climate-related measures, failing thus to reach the target of 20 %; understands that this is largely due to delays in cohesion policy and the rural development programmes; urges Member States, who manage them, to speed up their implementation with a focus on climate-related spending in order to offset the lower allocations made during the first years of the MFF; calls on the Commission to develop an action plan within programmes having massive potential to contribute to reaching the climate-related spending target;
8. Underlines that Heading 3 has been largely mobilized in the recent years to address the migratory and refugee crisis and that such actions should continue for as long as needed; calls on the Commission to actively monitor the adequacy of allocations under Heading 3 and make full use of all available instruments to respond in a timely manner to any unforeseen event that might require additional funding in the area of migration; decides to reinforce the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund to fully cover the needs of the Union in the field of migration, notably to support Member States in improving integration measures and practices for migrants; notes, once again, that the Heading 3 ceiling is inadequate to provide appropriate funding to the internal dimension of those priorities, as well as to other priority programmes, for example in the field of culture; considers that willingness of local authorities to do more than planned in their National Programme under shared management, to support the Union Resettlement Programme, should be further supported through the direct management strand of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF);
9. Insists that in the light of recent security concerns across the Union, funding under Heading 3 should also pay particular attention to measures which will lead to enhancing security of Union citizens; decides for this reason to reinforce agencies in the field of Justice and Home Affairs which, due to increased workload and additional tasks, have been facing shortage of staff and funding in the past years;
10. Reiterates that part of the solution to the migratory and refugee crisis as well as to the security concerns of Union citizens lies in addressing the root causes of migration and devoting sufficient financial means to external instruments that aim at tackling issues

such as poverty, lack of employment, education and economic opportunities, instability, conflict and climate change; is of the opinion that the Union should make optimal use of financial means under Heading 4 which proved to be insufficient to equally address all external challenges;

11. Regrets that Parliament has not been duly involved in the discussions on the extension of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRT); reiterates its longstanding position that new initiatives must not be financed to the detriment of existing Union external projects; maintains, while recalling its support for the continuation of the FRT, that, given the stretched situation under Heading 4 to respond to external challenges, including migration, the Union budget should contribute to the financing of the second tranche in the same proportion as for the first one, i.e. EUR 1 billion, while the Member States should contribute EUR 2 billion to its financing;
12. Restores all cuts proposed by Council to the Draft Budget (DB) 2019 across all headings, with limited exceptions in Heading 4 and subheading 1b; 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, or majority of cuts to external policies; stresses that the logic behind Council's cuts is not substantiated by the actual implementation figures and ignores the varying implementation patterns of certain programmes;
13. Concludes that, for the purpose of adequately financing all pressing needs, and considering the very tight or inexistent margins under certain headings in 2019, all means available in the MFF Regulation in terms of flexibility 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, particularly given that this year's conciliation will be the last ahead of the May 2019 European elections;
14. Sets the overall level of appropriations for 2019 at EUR 166 340 598 313 in commitment appropriations and EUR 149 349 221 847 in payment appropriations, representing an increase of EUR 721 243 411 in commitment appropriations compared to the DB 2019;

Subheading 1a – Competitiveness for growth and jobs

15. Rejects Council's unjustified EUR 794 million cuts to subheading 1a, which represent just over half of the overall Council cuts in commitments in MFF headings; notes that such cuts run counter to Council's stated political priorities; is concerned moreover that they could hamper implementation of programmes that play a vital role in the creation of jobs and growth, which could have a negative impact on the economic recovery under way in the Union;
16. Points in that connection to programmes such as Horizon 2020 and CEF and the flagship space programmes, such as Copernicus, which provide very strong European added-value; regrets the significant Council cuts in the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation with an overwhelmingly negative impact on Horizon 2020 and especially regrets cuts in relevant budget lines such as Strengthening research in future and emerging

technologies and Strengthening European research infrastructure; notes also that many of these programmes make an important contribution to the fight against climate change, and considers that this contribution should be strengthened; decides therefore to reverse all cuts made by the Council and, furthermore, to fully restore the original profile of the Horizon 2020 and CEF lines that were cut for the provisioning of the EFSI Guarantee Fund;

17. Recalls that Erasmus+ remains a highly valued and hugely popular programme promoting youth learning mobility, as demonstrated by the volume of applications received, which exceeds the funding available, and notes also that it helps foster a strong sense of European identity; deeply regrets that the 2019 draft budget for Erasmus+ falls well below Parliament's expectations, failing to go beyond the programmed figures under the current MFF; considers it therefore essential to reinforce the education and training and youth strands of Erasmus +, as a corollary to the strengthening of the Youth Employment Initiative under subheading 1b;
18. Highlights yet again the fact that SMEs are an essential part of the Union economy and play a crucial role in job creation throughout the Union; believes that there is a need to create an SME-friendly business environment, as well as to support SME clusters and networks; notes, however, with deep concern the Council cuts to the SME instrument, which send a contradictory signal to businesses in the Union; considers that the Union budget can be a key tool in making SMEs more competitive and more innovative and in fostering the spirit of enterprise in the Union; recalls in this regard COSME and Horizon 2020;
19. Decides, therefore, to further reinforce, beyond the DB and the pre-EFSI profiles, those programmes that are key to boosting growth and jobs and tackling climate change and that reflect widely agreed Union priorities, namely Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 (including Marie Curie, leadership in space, European Research Council, SME Instrument), COSME, CEF and EaSI;
20. Increases therefore the level of commitment appropriations for subheading 1a above the DB by EUR 566 773 112 (excluding pre-EFSI restoration, compensation for the European Labour Authority proposal, pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed within the margin available and by a further mobilisation of the Global Margin for Commitments;
21. Expresses its intention to pay particular attention to the implementation by the Commission of the agreements found on the European Defence Industrial Development Programme and the European Solidarity Corps, which should be set out in the Amending Letter, to be issued by the Commission in October 2018;

Subheading 1b – Economic, social and territorial cohesion

22. Recalls that youth unemployment rates remain unacceptably high in the Union; emphasises that, in order to address this issue, it is of importance to ensure proper funding of the Youth Guarantee schemes through YEI and the European Social Fund (ESF); welcomes the agreement on the need to provide fresh funding for YEI, and the inclusion of the corresponding appropriations in the DB 2019; considers nevertheless that, given the challenges and risks posed by youth unemployment, YEI should benefit from increased appropriations and therefore decides to bring YEI to EUR 580 million in commitments in

2019; considers that this increase is in addition to the amount for YEI currently programmed for the 2014-2020 period;

23. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the implementation of cohesion policy programmes is accelerated to catch up with the delays; notes that even though the Council has not questioned the level of payment appropriations as proposed by the Commission, Parliament will carefully examine the Commission's updated forecasts, to adjust the payment appropriations to real needs in order to avoid the reconstitution of a payment backlog at the end of the current MFF;
24. In line with the agreement reached on the revision of the Structural Reforms Support Programme (SRSP), agrees with the transfer of EUR 40 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 17,2 million in payment appropriations from subheading 1b to Heading 2;

Heading 2 – Sustainable growth: natural resources

25. Recalls that the Commission's proposal to increase appropriations to finance the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) needs is largely due to a significantly lower amount of assigned revenue being expected to be available in 2019;
26. Notes the Council's cuts of EUR 310 million in commitment appropriations (-0,52 % compared to DB 2019) and EUR -328,13 million in payment appropriations (-0,57 % compared to DB 2019), but considers that the Commission's Amending Letter should remain the basis for any reliable revision of EAGF appropriations and restores the DB levels accordingly, pending an examination of that Amending Letter in conciliation;
27. Decides to increase the funding for the emergency support in particular for pig-meat against the African swine fever in order to reduce the negative impact upon farmers and employees in the regions most affected by the disease; decides to express its strong support for the agricultural sector in the Union by increasing the appropriations for fruit and vegetables, in order to tackle the effects of the crisis in the sector and the effects of the Russian embargo, as well as for measures to tackle the effects of plaques xilella fastidiosa and the volatility of the price of olive oil;
28. Decides, in line with its Europe 2020 targets and with its international commitments to tackle climate change, to propose an increase of EUR 15,6 million above the level of the DB for climate-related actions;
29. Decides, in the light of the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the SRSP revision, to lift the reserve introduced by the Council on the amounts transferred from subheading 1b;
30. Increases therefore commitment appropriations by EUR 154,1 million, excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions, leaving a margin of EUR 190,8 million below the ceiling for commitments in Heading 2;

Heading 3 - Security and Citizenship

31. Reiterates its long-standing conviction that the Heading 3 ceiling has proven vastly insufficient to adequately fund the internal dimension of essential challenges related on the one hand to internal security, and on the other hand to migration;
32. Expects the pressure on some Member States' migration and asylum systems, as well as on their borders, to remain high in 2019, and is of the opinion that additional funding is needed in the field of migration, also in view of any future, unpredictable needs in this area; reinforces therefore the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund as regards supporting legal migration to the Union and promoting the effective integration of third-country nationals and enhancing fair and effective return strategies, in particular to support Member States in improving integration measures for migrants, especially children and unaccompanied minors;
33. Welcomes the increase in commitment appropriations for ASIF in order to finance the new Dublin II legislation (assuming it is adopted by the end of 2018) and rejects the Council's decision to move the corresponding appropriations into a reserve;
34. Underlines that internal security must remain one of the Union's main priorities and stresses the role of the Internal Security Fund (ISF) as the key financial instrument to support Member States in the area of security, including in the fight against terrorism and radicalisation, serious and organised crime and cybercrime; decides therefore to increase budgetary appropriations of the ISF, also to strengthen support for border management and to provide assistance for victims of terrorist acts;
35. Points out the essential role played by the Union agencies in the area of justice and home affairs in enhancing cooperation between Member States to address the concerns of Union citizens; decides to increase budgetary appropriations and staffing of European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL), European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), eu-LISA, European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust) and for the new European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO);
36. Regrets Council's arbitrary cuts of more than EUR 35 million in commitment appropriations to numerous programmes in the areas of culture, citizenship, justice and public health, despite these programmes' excellent implementation rates and already insufficient levels of financing that leave many high-quality projects unfunded; restores all lines at least to the level of the draft budget while proposing additional increases to relevant lines;
37. Stresses the value of Creative Europe in supporting the Union's audio-visual and cultural sectors and insists that funding levels should match the ambitions of the programme; calls for an increase in committee appropriations for the MEDIA and the Culture sub-programmes, inter alia to tackle low application success rates; also increases appropriations for multimedia actions and for strengthening the financial capacity of SMEs in the European cultural and creative sectors;
38. Recalls its support for the rights, equality, citizenship and justice programmes; decides to increase commitment appropriations for instruments dealing with non-discrimination and equality in general, and specifically the Daphne programme, and to fight gender-based violence and enforce women's and LGBTIQI+ rights;

39. Reinforces Heading 3 by EUR 127,75 million in commitment appropriations with respect to the draft budget, excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions, and proposes to finance these reinforcements by a further mobilisation of special instruments;

Heading 4 – Global Europe

40. Stresses that the complex geopolitical challenges the Union is facing call urgently for a stronger Union external presence; emphasizes once again that the Union's external action can only be credible if it is backed by sufficient financial resources; recalls that the funding needs greatly exceed the current size of Heading 4 and calls for appropriate room for manoeuvre in the event of unforeseen external crises;
41. In this respect, reaffirms, in line with its position expressed in its abovementioned resolution of 5 July 2018, that the current ratio of contribution to the FRT from the Union budget (EUR 1 billion) and Member States (EUR 2 billion) should be maintained for the financing of the second tranche of the FRT; decides therefore to reduce the contributions of the Union budget from EUR 1,45 billion to EUR 450 million; believes that the difference should be instead financed by Member States' bilateral contributions;
42. Believes that promoting peace, security and justice in developing countries are paramount in addressing the root causes of migration and corresponding humanitarian challenges in the Southern Neighbourhood; underlines the importance of supporting good governance, democracy, the rule of law and vibrant civil society to effectively combat poverty over the long-term, and address the challenges of the climate change in developing countries; decides therefore to increase resources for the Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the Southern part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) under its various strands, to reflect also the considerable stress under which ENI will continue to be in 2019;
43. Recalls that the Union has committed to comprehensively protect and promote the rights of the child in its external policy; stresses the importance of implementing the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child in European Union external relation;
44. Underscores the strategic importance of providing sufficient funding for the Western Balkans in order to consolidate their path towards accession; fails to understand the Council's proposal to cut the allocation for political reforms, as these are the backbone of any democratic transformation; stresses the need for appropriate financial backing to the 2018-2020 Action Plan of the Western Balkan Strategy, and decides, consequently, to increase the allocation of Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) for the region;
45. Highlights that the situation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership represents also a significant challenge for the Union; is convinced of the importance of providing additional funding to support our neighbours' reform efforts, contribute to increasing resilience and fostering peace and improving day to day life of the citizens of these countries;
46. Calls for enhanced Union support to the Middle East Peace process, the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA, in line with its resolution of 8 February 2018 on the situation of

UNRWA¹, in view of the worsening situation on the ground and the decision of the United States to drastically reduce its engagement;

47. Is convinced of the potential of people-to-people contacts and youth mobility, also as one of the key strategies to enhance the impact of the Union external action and its visibility among the public of partner countries; decided therefore to reinforce the contributions from DCI, ENI, IPA II, and Partnership Instrument to Erasmus+;
48. In line with the principle of conditionality, supports a reduction in the amount allocated to Turkey in all budget lines, in view of the continuing backsliding on the rule of law, democracy and human rights; at the same time, deems it necessary to further strengthen the direct support to civil society, as well as people-to-people contacts;
49. As a result, decides to reverse almost all of the Council's cuts, to reinforce Heading 4 by EUR 425,4 million above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), while decreasing FRT and Turkey related lines and non restoring Council's cuts with a total effect of EUR -1,24 billion, thereby resulting in a net difference of EUR -819,1 million below the DB in Heading 4;

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

50. Considers that Council's cuts are unjustified and do not reflect the real needs; restores therefore the DB for all Commission administrative expenditure, including administrative and research support expenditure in Headings 1 to 4;

Decentralised Agencies

51. Endorses, as a general rule, the Commission's estimates of the budgetary needs of agencies; considers, therefore, that any further cuts proposed by the Council would endanger the proper functioning of the agencies and would not allow them to fulfil the tasks they have been assigned;
52. Recalls the importance for the Union focusing on competitiveness for growth and jobs; considers, in this context, that additional appropriation and staff are needed for the European GNSS Agency (GSA) and the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER); welcomes the creation of the European Labour Authority (ELA); restores the substantial Council's cuts in the appropriations for the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs), while putting parts of their appropriations into reserve pending progress on the ESAs' review;
53. In the context of the challenges the Union is still facing in terms of security, and bearing in mind the necessity for a coordinated European response, decides to reinforce the appropriations for the EUROPOL, CEPOL, EUROJUST, EPPO, and the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA);
54. Expects the pressure on some Member States' migration and asylum systems, as well as on their borders, to remain high in 2019, stresses that while the budgetary resources and

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0042.

the number of posts for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), proposed by the Commission and supported by the Council, seem adequate for the time being, the future needs of the agencies in terms of operational resources and staff will have to be closely monitored;

55. Reiterates its position that the 5 % staff reduction target has been successfully reached; considers that the new posts adopted in its position are needed to fulfil additional tasks due to new policy developments and new legislation;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

56. Recalls the importance of pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs) as tools for the formulation of political priorities and the introduction of new initiatives that have the potential to turn into standing Union activities and programmes; having carried out a careful analysis of all the proposals submitted and taking into account the Commission's assessment of their respect of legal requirements and implementability, decides to adopt a balanced package of PP-PAs that reflects Parliament's political priorities;

Special instruments

57. Recalls the usefulness of special instruments to provide flexibility over and beyond the extremely tight ceilings of the current MFF and welcomes the improvements brought about by the mid-term revision of the MFF Regulation; calls for an extensive use of the Flexibility Instrument, the Global Margin for Commitments and the Contingency Margin in order to finance the wide range of new challenges and additional responsibilities that the Union budget is facing; recalls also the significance of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR) and the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF);

Payments

58. Reiterates its concerns that, despite recent catching-up, under-execution in payments has reached record low in the past three years, notably in subheading 1b; regrets that such delays prevent Union priorities and projects to deliver their full potential to citizens in a timely manner; points to the fact that, as a result, the DB leaves an unprecedented margin of EUR 19,3 billion below the payment ceiling; reinforces payment appropriations on those lines which are amended in commitment appropriations;

Other Sections

Section I - European Parliament

59. Maintains unchanged the overall level of its budget for 2019, in line with its resolution on its estimates of revenue and expenditure adopted by the plenary on 19 April 2018¹, at EUR 1 999 144 000; incorporates budgetary-neutral technical adjustments to reflect updated information which was not available earlier this year;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0182.

60. Notes that the level of estimates for 2019 corresponds to 18,53 %, which is lower than that achieved in 2018 (18,85 %) and the lowest part of Heading V in more than fifteen years;
61. Notes that, due to the 2019 European Parliament election, expenditure will be higher in some areas, in particular in respect of Members who are not re-elected and their assistants, whilst savings, albeit of a lesser magnitude, will be generated in other areas as a result of the reduction in the volume of parliamentary business in an election year;
62. Welcomes that the 2019 budget will include further instalments of substantial investments started back in 2016 with a view to significantly improving Parliament's security; points out that those projects cover various domains, mainly relating to buildings, i.e. the security upgrade of the entrance, equipment and staff, as the iPACS Project, but also improvements in the field of cyber-security and communication security;
63. Reduces the establishment plan of its General Secretariat for 2019 by 59 posts (1 % staff reduction target), in accordance with the agreement of 14 November 2015 reached with the Council on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, in which Parliament's annual staff reduction measures are set to continue until 2019;
64. Welcomes the decision of 25 September 2018 of the General Court confirming the Parliament's refusal to grant access to documents relating to MEPs' subsistence allowances, travel expenses and parliamentary assistance allowances (Judgment in Cases T-639/15 to T-666/15 Maria Psara and Others v Parliament and T-94/16 Gavin Sheridan v Parliament);
65. Recalls that on 23 October 1997, in its resolution on the general budget for 1998, the European Parliament called upon its Bureau to request the Court of Auditors to investigate Parliament's voluntary pension scheme, which led to the issuance of the Court of Auditor's opinion no. 5/99 dated 16 June 1999 on the "Pension Fund and Scheme for Members of the European Parliament"; calls now on the Bureau to urgently request the Court of Auditors to produce another such opinion on the pension scheme and fund in 2019;
66. recalls that, in a note to the Bureau dated 8 March 2018, its Secretary-General accepted that the pension fund linked to the Member's voluntary pension scheme "will exhaust its capital well before the end of the pension obligations and possibly already by 2024"; calls therefore upon the Secretary-General and the Bureau, while respecting fully the Statute for Members, to urgently establish with the pension fund a clear plan for the Parliament assuming and taking over its obligations and responsibilities for its Member's voluntary pension scheme immediately after the 2019 elections;
67. Demands additional Union support for the parliamentary dimension of the WTO, in particular by an increased financial and personnel support to the responsible secretariat;
68. Calls for the upgrade of the European Science Media Hub, adopted in the 2018 budget, and for cooperation with television stations, social media and further partners in order to establish training purposes for young journalists, especially in relation to new scientific and technological developments and to fact-based, peer-reviewed news;

Section IV - Court of Justice

69. Restores the DB on all budget items cut by the Council, which are essential to the functioning of the Court, and restores the estimates for two budget items in order to enhance the Court's ability to deal with increasingly high translation demands;
70. Restores the 16 posts and the related appropriations cut by the Commission in the DB to prevent any bottleneck that might be detrimental to the productivity of the courts in the context of new activities taken up by the Court and of continuous increase of the workload; considers that the creation of 16 new permanent posts for the support services, initially proposed by the Court and rejected by the Commission, should be granted;

Section V - Court of Auditors

71. Restores the DB on all items cut by Council, in order to implement the work programme of the Court of Auditors and to deliver the planned Audit Reports;

Section VI - European Economic and Social Committee

72. Restores the DB on all items cut by the Council;
73. Increases a number of lines above the DB in line with the European Economic and Social Committee's own estimates;

Section VII - Committee of the Regions

74. Restores the DB on all items cut by the Council;
75. Increases a number of lines above the DB in line with the Committee of the Region's own estimates;

Section VIII - European Ombudsman

76. Maintains unchanged the overall level of the Ombudsman's budget for 2019 as proposed by the Commission in the DB;

Section IX - European Data Protection Supervisor

77. Decides not to restore the DB in the line cut by the Council, due to a high increase of the total budget as compared to the previous year;

Section X - European External Action Service

78. Restores the DB on all lines cut by the Council;
79. Increases a number of lines above the DB in line with EEAS own estimates;
80. Restores the 28 posts + 5 more and related appropriations cut by the Council as it is a moderate staff increase that is justified by the EEAS's significant new responsibilities, in particular those connected to Brexit (creation of a new Union delegation in London and a

new unit in the headquarters) and the adoption of a number of initiatives in the field of security and defence in recent months.

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81. 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.