

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2008/2026(BUD)

11.9.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2009
(C6-0309/2008 – 2008/2026(BUD))

Section III – Commission

Rapporteur: Karin Jöns

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SUGGESTIONS

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

General comments on the employment and social affairs area

1. Points out that a binding financial framework is applicable for the 2007-2013 period to most budget headings in the employment and social affairs area, including, accordingly, the heading for the European Social Fund, which accounts for about 95% of budget funds for the area; notes that the binding financial framework does not apply to social dialogue and mobility, agencies, studies or pilot projects;
2. Calls on the Commission, in view of the imminent review of the Financial Regulation¹ to analyse the effects of the degressivity clause;
3. Welcomes the fact that, by way of preparation for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010), a new budget heading has been created with an allocation of EUR 6.5 million (04 04 12);
4. Welcomes the projected allocation of EUR 953 363 000 for the promotion of the lifelong learning programme and hopes that the funds will be allocated equitably for lifelong learning, adult retraining and teacher training, in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all, so as to assist those belonging to the most vulnerable categories or residing in less-favoured areas of the Union;

Information and training measures for workers' organisations (04 03 03 02)

5. Points out that the annual 1% reduction in funds (the degressivity clause) is increasingly hindering the European trade union institute ETUI-REHS and the European Centre for Workers' Questions EZA in carrying out European projects because of the generally low equity ratios of their member organisations in the new Member States;
6. Calls on the Commission to find, in 2009, as part of the revision of the Financial Regulation, a way of limiting the annual reduction in funds for ETUI-REHS and EZA;

Social dialogue and mobility (04 03)

7. Regrets that funds for social dialogue and worker mobility have been cut by 1.5% since the previous year and underscores the fact that, in the present times of globalisation, Parliament attaches particular importance to this area;
8. Welcomes the EUR 650 000 increase in funds for the budget heading 'Industrial relations and social dialogue' (04 03 03 01);
9. Regrets that, although Parliament has stressed time and time again the great importance

¹ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

of European works councils in keeping the industrial peace in international conglomerates and firms with sites in various Member States of the Union, EUR 800 000 has been cut from the funding under the budget heading 'Information, consultation and participation of representatives of undertakings' (04 03 03 03); calls on the Commission to check whether, by reorganising organisational arrangements for calls for tender, the implementation of budget heading 04 03 03 03 might not be improved in future;

10. Regrets that funds for EURES (European Employment Services) have been cut by EUR 1 million; stresses that, in 2007, Parliament decided to increase EURES funding by precisely that amount, with a view to improving the quality of the services it provides, and insists on the reinstatement of the 2008 appropriations in the 2009 budget;
11. Calls on the Commission to examine, under budget line 04 03 05 'Free movement of workers, co-ordination of social security' the feasibility of a European Social Card for workers exercising their right of free movement, which would be comparable to the European Health Insurance Card and would facilitate access to social security rights for citizens and help reduce administrative burdens by pooling information; recommends that such a card might initially relate to the matters covered by Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems, namely sickness benefits, pensions, invalidity, accidents, unemployment and family benefits;

Agencies

12. Regrets that, contrary to the Commission's assurances, funds for three agencies whose work falls within the employment and social affairs area, namely Eurofound in Dublin, OSHA in Bilbao and Cedefop in Thessaloniki, have been considerably cut;
13. Calls, in the interests of these agencies, for at least the 2008 appropriations to be made under the relevant heading in the 2009 budget;

PROGRESS (04 04 01)

14. Calls for payment appropriations increases of EUR 1 million and EUR 800 000 respectively for social protection and inclusion and for non-discrimination and diversity, so that more projects and projects on a larger scale can be carried out in 2009;
15. Notes that cooperation and coordination between Member States' labour inspectorates on unreported paid employment are inadequate; calls on the Commission to examine, under PROGRESS (04 04 01 03: Working conditions), the possibility of establishing a body, comparable to EUROPOL, responsible for combating illegal employment;
16. Expresses concern about the social and housing problems that many municipalities in certain 'old' Member States are confronted by as a result of the (temporary) high influx of citizens of Member States that recently joined the Union, which stems from the free movement of services and workers; stresses the need to provide support to such municipalities so as to help create social support for freedom of movement, for instance in the framework of PROGRESS, and safeguard social cohesion and foster commitment to the accession of new Member States among the people of the municipalities

temporarily confronted with this migration;

Pilot projects

17. Points to the European added value of pilot projects in responding to unfolding developments outside the scope of existing programmes; stresses the significance of pilot projects for framing forward-looking initiatives and for setting new political priorities;
18. Advocates continuing the pilot project 'New employment situation in the health sector' (17 03 08); points out that demographic change is resulting in greater demand for health care services, leading to a greatly changed employment situation in that sector; points out that the goal of the pilot project is to identify best practices and to fund initiatives which can help address challenges in this area more effectively;
19. Proposes a pilot project on the issue of violence against the elderly which would investigate the extent and causes of physical and psychological violence against elderly people, as well as methods and consequences of financial exploitation, and identify strategies to prevent and reduce them; points in this connection to Parliament's finding in its report on the demographic future of Europe, that about 10% of elderly people are affected by violence;
20. Proposes a pilot project on the employment and living conditions of posted workers, given the continuing lack of reliable data on these conditions; believes that investigations should focus on the farming, construction industry and health care sectors, since most posted workers are employed in those areas.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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| Date adopted | 10.9.2008 |
| Result of final vote | +: 45 -: 2 0: 0 |
| Members present for the final vote | Jan Andersson, Edit Bauer, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Jean Louis Cottigny, Jan Cremers, Proinsias De Rossa, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Roger Helmer, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Jean Lambert, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Mary Lou McDonald, Thomas Mann, Maria Matsouka, Elisabeth Morin, Juan Andrés Naranjo Escobar, Csaba Óry, Siiri Oviir, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Rovana Plumb, Jacek Protasiewicz, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Elisabeth Schroedter, José Albino Silva Peneda, Jean Spautz, Gabriele Stauner, Ewa Tomaszewska, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer |
| Substitute(s) present for the final vote | Petru Filip, Donata Gottardi, Rumiana Jeleva, Anne E. Jensen, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Sepp Kusstatscher, Claude Moraes, Roberto Musacchio, Csaba Sógor |
| Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote | |