



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Regional Development

2012/2092(BUD)

20.9.2012

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Budgets

on the General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013 - all sections
(2012/2092(BUD))

Rapporteur: Georgios Stavrakakis

PA_NonLeg

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION:

Although economic recovery is uneven across Member States, the Commission is building on a forecast of a return to growth in the second half of 2012, thus designing measures in order to enhance growth and job creation, and aiming at providing Europe's economy the much needed investments and jobs. In this context, while proposing a strict increase in commitment appropriations, limited to inflation correction, and targeting a significant increase in the level of payments, the Commission has established five main priorities for the 2013 Draft Budget, namely investments for job-friendly growth, a responsible and realistic budget, scrutinising performance, implementing administrative restraint and integrating Croatia.

Your rapporteur shares the Commission's view on the indisputable added value of the Union's Cohesion Policy and on its role as a key policy area geared towards investment, which offers the best means of creating jobs and promoting economic growth. Stresses, however, that whilst the budgetary resources under heading 1b should be used so as to align policy areas with the objectives of the EU2020 Strategy, the objectives of Cohesion Policy, and in particular the reduction of regional disparities and social, economic and territorial cohesion, remain of utmost importance.

REINSTATING THE DRAFT BUDGET:

In making its budgetary provisions, the Commission has therefore assessed budgetary needs taking into account the provisions and envelopes of the financial perspective 2007-2013 and the Interinstitutional Agreement, bringing all figures in line with the relevant decisions and provisions.

Your rapporteur considers that the only institution which has the available information to have an overview of the real budgetary needs of all regions is the Commission. Consequently, he proposes that any reductions proposed by the Council be cancelled and that the sums initially proposed by the Commission in the Draft budget, be reinstated.

SHARE-OUT OF RESOURCES BETWEEN FUNDS:

The share-out between the different appropriations and funds is as follows:

Total commitment appropriations for the Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF) amount to EUR 42 144,7 million and for the Cohesion Fund to EUR 12 354,2 million, representing an overall increase of 3,3% relative to 2012. The increase in payment appropriations is significantly higher - 11,7%, relative to 2012, amounting to EUR 48 975 million, also representing an effort to limit the growth of outstanding commitments. However, it should be noted that the Commission's estimate strictly relates to 2013 and assumes that payment needs from previous years will have been covered, and therefore any deviation from this will lead to insufficient payment appropriations.

MAIN POLICY OUTPUTS FOR 2012:

The main policy outputs, as established by the Commission, include again the alignment of Cohesion Policy with the objectives with the Europe 2020, as well as the use of Cohesion Policy as an effective instrument for fighting the crisis, namely by supporting Member States which are in particular need, like those under EU/IMF programmes. In this context, the Commission has taken the initiative to propose to Member States to re-programme not yet

allocated funds under the Structural Funds, where possible, to reinforce their efforts to address youth unemployment and support SME's, launching a joint initiative with eight Member States in this framework. Other main areas of focus will also be the legal framework, the delivery mechanisms for the future programming period, and the implementation of the Common Strategic Framework. The Commission therefore wants to concentrate on discussing with Member States the strategic investment priorities for 2014-2020, and on the preparatory stages of the operational programmes. Moreover, work on the EU Baltic Strategy and the EU Danube Strategy is expected to continue, while the cooperation on the Atlantic Strategy will be further developed with DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. Finally, the Commission plans to work on consolidating the position of Croatia as Member State from 1 July 2013.

PILOT PROJECTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

This year Members have again proposed a reduced number of potential pilot projects and preparatory actions, most of which concern extensions of previously approved measures, namely the **"Atlantic Forum for the EU Atlantic Strategy"**, **"Towards a common regional identity, reconciliation of nations and economic and social cooperation including a Pan-European Expertise and Excellence Platform in the Danube macro-region"**, **"Enhancing regional and local cooperation through the promotion of EU regional policy on a global scale"**, **"The definition of governance model for the European Union Danube Region – better and effective coordination"**, as well as **"Supporting Mayotte, or any other territory potentially affected, with the switchover to outermost region status "**.

The new measures proposed include a preparatory action for the development of macro-regional strategies in the Mediterranean, a pilot project with regards to the current and the targeted economic potential in Greek regions other than the Athens capital region as a model for convergence regions in the EU, and finally a pilot project for the development of a services platform for SMEs exports.

The continuation of the measure of **"Technical assistance and dissemination of information on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and an improved knowledge of macro-regions strategy"**, is also proposed, and should therefore also be tabled as an amendment to the Draft Budget.

SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Takes the view that the amounts entered in the Draft Budget (DB) for heading 1b correspond to the minimum needs and objectives of regional policy as set by the Union and therefore requires that budget lines of heading 1b, as proposed by the Commission, be maintained or, where necessary, restored;
2. Stresses that the effective and efficient implementation of regional policy is key to the economic recovery and to the achievement of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, as it contributes not only to creating the right framework for a stable and sustainable economic growth and job creation, but also, and equally important, to the effective reduction of regional disparities and the achievement of social, economic and territorial cohesion;
3. Welcomes the commitment appropriations' increase of heading 1 b by 3,3 % to EUR 54 499 million, and the payment appropriations' increase by 11,7 %, to EUR 48 975 million, over 2012, this latter sum including the reduction of 33,2% to EUR 1 923 million in payments for the closure of the 2000-2006 period;
4. Welcomes the Commission's initiative of reprogramming where possible resources not yet spent from the Structural Fund appropriations in some Member States in favour of SMEs and youth employment, in line with Parliament's priorities; considers that this could result in a major boost to EU economic recovery and achievement of growth and employment objectives and asks to be kept duly informed on the implementation of this initiative at national level, its expected impact on growth and jobs, and its possible impact on the 2013 budget;
5. Stresses the outstanding importance of pilot projects, preparatory actions and technical assistance measures as key tools for the formulation of priorities and paving the way for new initiatives, and calls on the Commission to support and implement all the pilot projects, preparatory actions and technical assistance measures as proposed by the Committee on Regional Development for heading 1b.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	18.9.2012
Result of final vote	+: 31 -: 3 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Luís Paulo Alves, Charalampos Angourakis, Victor Boştinaru, John Bufton, Alain Cadec, Francesco De Angelis, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Danuta Maria Hübner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, María Irigoyen Pérez, Seán Kelly, Mojca Kleva, Constanze Angela Krehl, Petru Constantin Luhan, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Ana Miranda, Jens Nilsson, Jan Olbrycht, Younous Omarjee, Markus Pieper, Ewald Stadler, Georgios Stavrakakis, Nuno Teixeira, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Oldřich Vlasák, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Ivars Godmanis, Karin Kadenbach, Andrey Kovatchev, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Derek Vaughan