



Budgets Committee recommends reversing Council cuts in EU budget for 2015

Committees Committee on Budgets [30-09-2014 - 11:11]

Extra funds should be added to the EU's 2015 budget for growth and jobs policies, education, including the EU's Erasmus+ student mobility programme, and EU humanitarian and support work in war-stricken zones, said the Budgets Committee in votes on Monday and Tuesday. It also recommended that the European Parliament as a whole should reverse cuts sought by the Council of Ministers in planned and actual expenses.

The committee votes restored all the Council cuts in the European Commission's initial proposal, which reduced the €145.599 billion commitments proposal by €522 million, and the €142.137 billion payments proposal by €2.1 billion.

"We should use the budget as an investment tool to help overcome the crisis. The programmes we have reinforced are of strategic significance for the future", said Eider Gardiazábal Rubial (S&D, ES), who is in charge of steering the bulk of the budget through Parliament.

The committee sought to ensure enough funds are available to settle R&D bills carried over from 2013, to launching programmes under the EU's Horizon 2020 research tool, and to provide financing for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

MEPs also stepped up funding for the EU's Erasmus+ student mobility programme, which is already struggling to meet payment obligations for this year, and for the Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived.

"Cutting back EU programmes aimed at stimulating growth, creating jobs, fostering development and supporting education is going against what the Council itself had defined as EU priorities", emphasized Ms Gardiazábal.

Budgets MEPs also added additional funds to support EU farmers and fisheries hit by Russian trade sanctions and for humanitarian aid programmes in among others Syria. More resources were voted for Ukraine and Palestine as well. The three banking supervision agencies, the European Banking authority (EBA), the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) and the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) also received more resources than the Council and the Commission had proposed.

Pending payments issue

MEPs nonetheless stressed that their reading of next year's budget would only work if Council agrees to settle payments due this year, thus preventing a growing backlog from snowballing on into 2015. Recurring payment crises delay payment of legitimate bills from SMEs, non-governmental organisations, students and other final beneficiaries of EU funding. The net expense of several amending budgets requested by the Commission is merely €100 million, yet it would add an additional €4.7 billion in resources needed to settle bills due this year. For 2015 the committee also added another €4 billion to the original Commission proposal to support priority areas, again to prevent payment delays.

What's next?

The final figures resulting from today's vote will be calculated and the full amounts will be voted in a committee resolution on October 7. Parliament as a whole votes its position on

Press release

22 October. Three weeks of conciliation talks with the Council start on 28 October with the aim to reaching a Council/Parliament deal in time for next year's budget to be voted by Parliament on 26 November and signed by its President.

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