



2018/0166R(APP)

10.10.2018

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Budgets

on the Interim report on MFF 2021-2027 – Parliament's position in view of an agreement
(COM(2018)0322 – 2018/0166R(APP))

Rapporteur for opinion: Petra Kammerevert

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its report:

1. Regrets the fact that while the Commission sees investing in people as an overarching EU policy priority¹, less than 11 % of the EU budget for the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) is earmarked for the ‘Investing in People’ sub-heading; calls for priorities to be backed up by funding commitments;
2. Underlines the enduring popularity and added value for EU citizens of the Erasmus+ programme, which is among the most successful programmes carried out within the EU budget; recalls that, for the 2014-2020 programming period, Erasmus+ was persistently unable to finance high-quality projects owing to a shortage of financial means; supports, as a long-term ambition, the aim of achieving a tenfold increase in its budget;
3. Reiterates Parliament’s position, as articulated in its 30 May 2018 resolution on the MFF and own resources², that it will base its calculations of MFF figures on constant prices, taking into account the UK’s withdrawal; insists, therefore, that the next Erasmus programme has a budget of at least EUR 41.1 billion in the next MFF (a real-terms tripling vis-à-vis the 2014-2020 MFF) and recalls that even this level of increase falls well below the aspirations expressed by the Commission President, some Member States and civil society; is bitterly disappointed with the increase put forward in the MFF proposal and its presentation, which makes it appear higher than it is in relative terms and frustrates transparent comparisons;
4. Stresses the value of cultural and citizenship programmes and calls for spending on both to be scaled up over the next MFF, particularly given the chronic under-funding evidenced in the current MFF and the importance of supporting citizenship education; insists on a doubling of the funding available under Creative Europe (EUR 2.806 billion in constant prices for 2021-2027), in addition to overall cross-programme spending on culture of at least 1 % over the next programming period; considers that cultural and creative industries should be a cross-cutting priority of EU programmes; demands that the ‘Europe for Citizens’ strand of the Justice, Rights and Values Fund is allocated a budget of at least EUR 1 per citizen;
5. Recalls that freedom of speech and media pluralism are fundamental values of the Union and reiterates the importance of efforts to enhance media literacy, digital literacy, cyber hygiene and safe online behaviour; considers that encouraging people to engage critically and honestly with the EU’s work requires media literacy and citizenship education, which also help foster the acquisition of transferable skills; welcomes the fact that the new Creative Europe programme proposal makes provision for supporting media pluralism and freedom and media literacy under the cross-sectoral strand, which should enable the expansion of already successful Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions; notes, moreover, the excellent work done by the Safer Internet Centres, currently supported through the Connecting Europe Facility’s Trans-European Telecommunications Network strand, to foster safe online behaviour among children; insists that the scheme be continued under

¹ Reflection Paper on the Future of EU Finances, June 2017.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0226.

the next MFF and that its current funding level of around EUR 12 million per year be at least matched in relative terms;

6. Supports the increased funding available for digital skills across the next generation of MFF programmes, notably the ESF+ (basic digital skills) and Digital Europe (advanced digital skills); insists on the need to develop a coordinated policy approach to digital skills and to maximise the effectiveness of funding for digital skills development across programmes;
7. Considers that a key aim of the next MFF should be to restore people's trust in the European project; underlines that getting people to engage critically and honestly with the EU's work requires clear, vibrant, high-quality and independent media coverage of European affairs; points to the role of the 'multimedia actions' budget line in supporting clear communication on the EU and securing an adequate mix of media channels, including radio, television and online; recalls, in that regard, its request for the Commission to conduct a full-scale review – to be provided to Parliament – of all activities under the 'multimedia actions' line in the current MFF to ensure that they have delivered on their core aims and that the next MFF strikes the right funding balance across actions; reiterates, moreover, that the cuts to the line in the 2014-2020 MFF severely hampered the effectiveness of cross-channel support, meaning notably that no long-term financing arrangement was put in place to support the excellent work of the pan-European radio network Euranet Plus; insists that the 'multimedia actions' line be reinforced in the 2021-2027 MFF;
8. Highlights the importance of the Commission's corporate communication activities in helping to get people engaged with European affairs and fostering citizens' informed commitment to the European project; stresses that these activities require a more joined-up communication strategy with a precise offer, including improved efforts to deliver true multilingualism;
9. Considers that citizens' trust in the EU project needs to be revived, while knowledge of the European integration process and awareness of European culture and values need to be disseminated to the widest possible audience; calls, therefore, for a dedicated action – possibly in the form of a prize for projects that engage the public with the European integration process and elicit a collective, grassroots reflection on the future of Europe – to be provided for in the next MFF;
10. Is sceptical as to whether a minimal increase in the European Social Fund is sufficient to meet the social and labour market objectives it pursues, in particular with regard to the fight against youth unemployment and the integration of migrants;
11. Insists on adequate flexibility across the EU budget and within the MFF programmes so as to adapt to new policy priorities and external developments; calls, in this regard, for the MFF and all programmes to contain a binding and meaningful mid-term review and revision clause to enable a re-focusing of spending and policy priorities as required; recalls that policy priority-setting falls within the exclusive purview of the legislator and that the much-needed flexibility must therefore go hand-in-hand with parliamentary oversight, meaning that implementing acts may only ever be used for implementation and never for political choices;

12. Welcomes the Commission's efforts to structure and present the new MFF in a more transparent and readable way; welcomes the co-location of education, culture and citizenship programmes under a single heading;
13. Insists that cross-programme synergies must always be understood as a means to deliver efficiency gains and simplification and do not amount to *carte blanche* for the Commission to redeploy funds from one programme to another or to make budgetary cuts; welcomes the Commission's overall political message with respect to synergies, but considers that the provisions as currently drafted within MFF programmes make it impossible for the legislator to understand how such synergies are to be achieved and for programme beneficiaries to understand what these synergies might mean for them; insists on more specific and transparent mechanisms, clearly laid down in the legal base, for achieving synergies;
14. Underlines that the EU budget must deliver demonstrable European added value so as to ensure effective and appropriate use of EU funding; calls for further development of the principle, introduced by the last MFF, that projects are only eligible for EU funding if their European added value is properly substantiated in the project application; believes that a focus on European added value requires a proper set of action-specific and measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators; emphasises, with respect to initiatives in the field of education and culture, that non-tangible benefits, such as the social impacts achieved by such initiatives, are just as important as material achievements; insists that programmes that fund education and culture projects, such as the ESF+ and the Structural Funds, require appropriate indicators to measure effectiveness, feed into the mid-term review and ultimately inform the next generation of programmes;
15. Recalls that programme implementation was initially slow in the current MFF, increasing the likelihood of payment obligations spilling over into the next MFF and needing to be settled under the new payment ceilings; stresses the need to avoid a repeat of the payments crisis that occurred at the end of the 2007-2013 MFF, since the beneficiaries of education and culture programme are often individuals and small organisations that can ill afford payment delays; points out that payment delays severely undermine the benefits of the programme and ultimately erode trust in the European project;
16. Commits to granting consent to the approval of the MFF Regulation by the Council only as a package agreement, including a credible proposal for reform of the Own Resources System.

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Title	Interim report on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Parliament’s position with a view to an agreement
References	2018/0166R(APP)
Committee responsible	BUDG
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	CULT 13.9.2018
Rapporteur Date appointed	Petra Kammerevert 16.5.2018
Date adopted	10.10.2018
Result of final vote	+: 25 –: 0 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Dominique Bilde, Nikolaos Chountis, Silvia Costa, Mircea Diaconu, Damian Drăghici, Angel Dzhambazki, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Rupert Matthews, Morten Messerschmidt, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Theodoros Zagorakis, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka, Michaela Šojdrová
Substitutes present for the final vote	Norbert Erdős, Martina Michels, Remo Sernagiotto, Francis Zammit Dimech

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

25	+
ALDE	Mircea Diaconu, María Teresa Giménez Barbat
EFDD	Isabella Adinolfi
ENF	Dominique Bilde
GUE/NGL	Nikolaos Chountis, Martina Michels
PPE	Norbert Erdős, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Theodoros Zagorakis, Francis Zammit Dimech, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver
S&D	Silvia Costa, Damian Draghici, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Krystyna Łybacka, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Julie Ward
VERTS/ALE	Jill Evans, Helga Trüpel

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ECR	Angel Dzhambazki, Rupert Matthews, Morten Messerschmidt, Remo Sernagiotto

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention