



2019/2055(DEC)

21.1.2020

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2018, Section III - Commission and executive agencies
(2019/2055(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Vangelis Meimarakis

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that no estimate of the level of error rate for spending under Heading 4 has been calculated for 2018 by the European Court of Auditors (ECA); fully supports the recommendations formulated by the ECA; emphasises in particular that the ECA needs to be able to access all relevant documents to be able to carry out its work, including when funds are disbursed via international organisations; supports the ECA's recommendation to reinforce the obligation on international organisations to forward the necessary documents;
2. Takes note of the ECA Special report No 32/2018 ("European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: Flexible but lacking focus"); calls on the Commission to address the outstanding recommendations without delay; emphasises the need to ensure that the projects funded through the EUTF are complementary to actions under other EU instruments and those funded by Member States or other donors; notes the low level of contributions from Member States and other donors, which calls into question the rationale for using an EU Trust Fund;
3. Commends the efforts of civil society worldwide in promoting and defending human rights, especially at a time of shrinking civil society space and the questioning of the universality of human rights; takes note of the ECA Special report No 35/2018 ("Transparency of EU funds implemented by NGOs: more effort needed"); highlights that the ECA found that in the area of external action the Commission's selection of non-governmental organisation (NGO) - led projects is generally transparent and that the Commission generally reported data on humanitarian and development assistance in accordance with international transparency standards; notes, however, that the ECA report found that the Commission could improve its transparency regarding the implementation of Union funds by NGOs; stresses that NGOs are subject to the same transparency requirements as other beneficiaries; calls on the Commission to improve its systems for monitoring the use of funds implemented by NGOs and ensure and verify the correct and consistent application of rules and procedures, in line with the ECA's recommendations, enabling also an assessment of the costs declared by all implementing actors; welcomes, in this context, the launch, in March 2019, of the EU Aid Explorer, a public website that shows all published data on external assistance from the EU institutions and Member States; stresses the importance of strengthened EU support for civil society organisations in the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF);
4. With regard to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), notes the continued weaknesses in administrative capacities of accession countries resulting in a lack of absorption capacity under indirect management; highlights that as pointed out in the ECA's 2018 special report on IPA funding for Turkey, progress in such sensitive areas as the rule of law and civil society is not only dependent on IPA funding but more importantly the political will of the authorities; notes with concern that IPA funds for Turkey barely addressed fundamental values including press freedom and impartiality

of justice; believes that it is more important now than ever for the Commission to make use of conditionality to support reforms in priority sectors such as the rule of law and governance in Turkey;

5. Welcomes the launch of the first capacity building measures under the amended Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) in 2018; emphasises that these actions should take place in the context of an overall security sector reform process; encourages stronger follow-up of short-term stabilisation actions by longer-term actions funded by the IcSP or other instruments;
6. Takes note of the ECA's analytical review on European Defence and supports its recommendations; calls on the Commission as guardian of the treaties to ensure the coherence of all Union defence efforts carried out for the implementation of a Union activity under the CSDP (PESCO, EDIDP, EDF, CARD etc.) and to ensure interoperability and synergies with NATO; considers that a competitive European defence technological and industrial base, enhancing Member States' military capabilities and framing a European Defence Union must be one of (AM 14) the key objectives of the Union under the next MFF; calls for more independent and publicly available assessments of EU civilian and military security measures, in particular EU military training missions, capacity building of military actors in third countries (CBDSD via IcSP), and border and migration management measures;
7. Invites the Commission to assess the legality of withdrawing the budgetary function from the European Parliament through the Council decisions on establishing the EDA and PESCO; recalls that the relevant articles 45(2) and 46(2) TEU provide for the decisions to be adopted by a qualified majority without a veto provision; recalls that the withdrawal of the budgetary function of the EP under Article 42 TEU is possible for the operating expenditure only and requires a unanimous decision by the Council; underlines that the Council has never taken such a decision;
8. Insists on the need to closely monitor the use of funds of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, ensuring that these funds are accurately targeting refugee projects and not used for any other purposes; calls on the Commission to report regularly to the budgetary authority on the compatibility of the actions financed with the underlying legal basis;
9. Is concerned by the lack of visibility of EU financed projects, emphasises the need to improve visibility and strengthen the complementarity of the EU's financial instruments.
10. Deplores the lack of flexibility in the administrative and budgetary/financial procedures concerning civilian CSDP missions; reiterates its opinion that the Commission should introduce specific procurement rules to the crisis management measures under the CSDP in order to facilitate the rapid and flexible conduct of missions;

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	21.1.2020
Result of final vote	+: 49 -: 10 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Phil Bennion, Lars Patrick Berg, Reinhard Bütikofer, Tanja Fajon, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Kinga Gál, Giorgos Georgiou, Nathan Gill, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Márton Gyöngyösi, Sandra Kalniete, Dietmar Köster, Stelios Kouloglou, Andrius Kubilius, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, David Lega, Nathalie Loiseau, Jaak Madison, Claudiu Manda, Thierry Mariani, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Sven Mikser, Francisco José Millán Mon, Urmas Paet, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Kati Piri, Giuliano Pisapia, Catherine Rowett, Isabel Santos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Andreas Schieder, Irina Von Wiese, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou, Željana Zovko
Substitutes present for the final vote	Attila Ara-Kovács, Loucas Furlas, Suna Glavak, Markéta Gregorová, Robert Hajšel, Martin Horwood, Arba Kokalari, Hannah Neumann, Luisa Porritt, Paulo Rangel, Tineke Strik, Javier Zarzalejos
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Costas Mavrides, Mikuláš Peksa, Geoffrey Van Orden

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

49	+
NI	Márton Gyöngyösi
PPE	Traian Băsescu, Loucas Fourlas, Michael Gahler, Kinga Gál, Suna Glavak, Sandra Kalniete, Arba Kokalari, Andrius Kubilius, David Lega, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Paulo Rangel, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Javier Zarzalejos, Željana Zovko
RENEW	Petras Auštrevičius, Phil Bennion, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Martin Horwood, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Nathalie Loiseau, Urmas Paet, Luisa Porritt, Irina Von Wiese
S&D	Attila Ara-Kovács, Maria Arena, Tanja Fajon, Raphaël Glucksmann, Robert Hajšel, Dietmar Köster, Claudiu Manda, Costas Mavrides, Sven Mikser, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Kati Piri, Giuliano Pisapia, Isabel Santos, Andreas Schieder
VERTS/ALE	Reinhard Bütikofer, Markéta Gregorová, Hannah Neumann, Mikuláš Peksa, Catherine Rowett, Tineke Strik, Salima Yenbou

10	-
ECR	Anna Fotyga, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Geoffrey Van Orden, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers
GUE/NGL	Giorgos Georgiou, Stelios Kouloglou
ID	Jaak Madison
NI	Nathan Gill, Kostas Papadakis

2	0
ID	Lars Patrick Berg, Thierry Mariani

	Correction to votes
+	
-	Thierry Mariani
0	

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention