25.2.2021

Mr Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair
Committee on Budgets
BRUSSELS

Subject: Opinion on General guidelines for the preparation of the 2022 budget, Section III – Commission (2020/2265(BU))

Dear Chair,

Under the procedure referred to above, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs has been asked to submit an opinion to your committee. At its meeting of 27 January 2021, the committee decided to send the opinion in the form of a letter.

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs considered the matter at its meeting of 25 February 2021. At that meeting, it decided to call on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution.

First of all, members of the committee wish to recall that in times of unprecedented economic, health, education and social challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union’s annual budget constitutes an important pillar of the EU’s response to the damage caused by the virus. The EU’s annual budget 2022 must be both ambitious and solid to ensure that the Union’s programmes can work as an effective economic stimulus.

They further underline the importance of boosting the EU budget by the European Union Recovery Instrument and stress the need for all Member States to ratify the new Own Resources Decision. They also draw attention to the need to pursue the implementation of the

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1 The following were present for the final vote: Antonio Tajani (Chair and rapporteur for opinion), Gabriele Bischoff (Vice-Chair), Charles Goerens (Vice-Chair), Giuliano Pisapia (Vice-Chair), Gerolf Annemans, Damian Boeselager, Geert Bourgeois, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Pascal Durand, João Ferreira (for Leila Chaibi), Daniel Freund, Esteban González Pons, Sandro Gozi, Brice Hortefeux, Laura Huhtasaari, Paulo Rangel, Antonio Maria Rinaldi, Doméneq Ruiz Devesa, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Helmut Scholz, Pedro Silva Pereira, László Trócsányi, Mihai Tudose, Guy Verhofstadt, Loránt Vincze, and Rainer Wieland.
roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources, in order to ensure that new own resources cover at least the expenditure related to the repayment of the European Union Recovery Instrument.

The members of the committee stress that the Union’s 2022 budget must also be sufficient to finance the exercise of the competences attributed to the Union by the Treaties, be focused on the common European interest and must allow the Union to deliver the results that matter to European citizens.

Effective communication with and consultation of citizens all over Europe should be among the top priorities of the budget in order to ensure broad, active and effective involvement of citizens. In particular, the budget for 2022 should have the resources necessary for the carry out of the Conference on the Future of Europe. These resources should be commensurate with the Conference’s goals as set out in the European Parliament’s position on the Conference on the Future of Europe\(^2\), including the organization of thematic European Citizens’ agoras and Youth agoras throughout the process.

The members of the committee underline the need for the adequate financing of the Union’s programmes, activities and initiatives that are vital for intensifying the participatory democracy processes in the EU, building citizens’ trust and enhancing their understanding of EU policies as well as developing and promoting European Citizenship, in particular the European Citizens’ Initiative and the Rights and Values Programme.

Proper levels of financing also need to be secured for the structures within the EU institutions and bodies which are responsible for communication with citizens and countering disinformation such as, among else, the Commission Representations and the future Secretariat of the Conference on the Future of Europe, in order to enable them to fulfil their tasks effectively.

Last but not least, the members of the committee recall the necessity of allocating adequate funds for the Commission’s communication services aiming at promoting citizenship education as well as informing citizens about the Union’s activities and policies, thus contributing to better awareness and countering disinformation in the Member States and online.

I am confident that the Committee on Budgets will take these suggestions into consideration when preparing the guidelines for the 2022 budget.

Yours sincerely,

Antonio Tajani