28.2.2022

Mr Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair
Committee on Budgets
BRUSSELS

Subject: Opinion on general Guidelines for the preparation of the 2023 budget, Section III – Commission (2021/2226(BUI))

Dear Mr 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 26 January 2022, the committee decided to send the opinion in the form of a letter. It considered the matter at its meeting of 28 February 2022 and adopted the opinion at that meeting\(^1\), calling on the Committee on Budgets to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution.

The members of the committee stress that the Union’s 2023 budget must be sufficient to finance the exercise of the competences attributed to the Union by the Treaties, be focused on the common European interest and allow the Union to deliver the results that matter to European citizens.

The members of the committee recall that the Union institutions agreed on a roadmap for the introduction of new own resources to ensure repayment of the recovery plan. It is important that the three Institutions adhere to the agreed timing.

The members of the committee further underline that the budget for 2023 should have the resources necessary for the implementation of the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe (Conference), including in form of legislative proposals or Treaty changes.

\(^1\) The following were present for the final vote: Antonio Tajani (Chair and rapporteur for the opinion), Gabriele Bischoff (1st Vice-Chair), Charles Goerens (2nd Vice-Chair), Giuliano Pisapia (3rd Vice-Chair), Gerolf Annemans, Vladimir Bilčík (for Loránt Vincze), Damian Boeselager, Geert Bourgeois, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Gwendoline Delbos Corfield, Pascal Durand, Daniel Freund, Sandro Gozi, Brice Hortefeux, Laura Huhtasaari, Seán Kelly (for Esteban González Pons), Gilles Lebreton (for Antonio Maria Rinaldi), Victor Negrescu, Paulo Rangel, Doméneq Ruiz Devesa, Jacek Saryusz Wolski, Helmut Scholz, Pedro Silva Pereira, Sven Simon, László Trócsányi, Guy Verhofstadt, Rainer Wieland
Effective communication with and consultation of citizens should be among the top priorities of the budget in order to ensure the effective and meaningful involvement of citizens. In particular, financial means should be ensured for organising regular citizens’ consultations on the Union’s policy objectives, challenges and priorities as a follow up to the Conference.

The members of the committee recall the need for the adequate financing of the Union’s programmes, activities and initiatives vital for intensifying the participatory democracy processes in the EU, building citizens’ trust and enhancing their understanding of EU policies, in particular the European Citizens’ Initiative and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV). In this regard, recalls the need to include a budget line for the elaboration of demonstrative and voluntary primary and secondary curriculum for EU and global citizenship education. While these contribute to further developing open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies, the respect for democracy and fundamental rights, including non-discrimination and gender equality, should be further prioritised.

Further, they remind that proper levels of financing need to be secured for the structures within the EU institutions and bodies that are responsible for communication with citizens and countering disinformation such as, among others, the Commission Representations and European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs), in order to enable them to fulfil their tasks effectively.

The members of the committee recall the importance to enhance the participation of the Union’s local entities, towns and villages, beyond Member States capitals in the democratic life of the Union; welcomes in this regard, the implementation of BELE - Building Europe with local entities.

In addition, they point out the need to apply Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget in full in order to protect the Union’s financial interests.

Last but not least, the members of the committee suggest that adequate budgetary resources should be ensured for the functioning of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (APPF) in view of expanding its tasks in the area of political advertisement and donations control on the basis of the Commission’s proposal of 25 November 2021 for a recast of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014. Furthermore, should a European Electoral Authority be created by 2023, adequate financing for this entity should be foreseen.

I am confident that the Committee on Budgets will take these suggestions into consideration when preparing the guidelines for the 2023 budget.

Yours sincerely,

Antonio Tajani