



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Foreign Affairs

(2012/2167(DEC))

8.2.2013

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 2011, Section III – Commission (C7-0224/2012 - 2012/2167(DEC))

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Stresses that the Union's resources must be managed in line with the principles of transparency and good governance; notes the Court of Auditors' finding that payments for the 2011 financial year are free from material error under heading 4 of the budget, but that interim and final payments are affected by material error; further notes that not all errors were quantifiable;
2. Notes that the Court of Auditors draws the Commission's attention to the limited scope of the measures it employs in its own controls; urges the Commission to strengthen controls in line with the recommendations of the Court of Auditors;
3. Points out, however, the specific nature of the financing of the Union's external assistance, which, although it must be subject to the same rules and oversight requirements as the rest of the Union budget, is put in place partly by persons and entities external to the Union, under sometimes difficult conditions, while needing to remain reactive and adaptable to crises and requirements;
4. Supports all the Court of Auditors' recommendations in respect of the chapter on 'External relations, aid and enlargement', in particular the recommendations concerning the Directorate-General of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the necessary improvements it needs to make to the management of the budget for the common foreign and security policy;
5. Considers, like the Court of Auditors, that the Commission should, in a more systematic way, seek to define more clearly the results it expects to achieve and the impact of its policies; stresses that defining specific benchmarks to measure progress as and when it is achieved will only make these intended results and impacts more precise and legitimate, and emphasizes the reciprocity between deliverables and the overall budget;
6. Stresses the need for greater transparency in the management of funds allocated to election observation missions; calls on the Commission to send a report to the budgetary authority, for each financial year, on the costs incurred for each mission, detailing all the budget items, including costs associated with external service providers;
7. Draws attention to the need to re-use election observation mission materials (furniture, computers, etc...) in other electoral missions or by EU delegations in order to maximise their use;
8. Welcomes the development of an improved budget support risk management framework by the Commission (in full application from 1 January 2013) as part of the new budget support guidelines in response to a key recommendation from the European Court of Auditors;
9. Notes however, in respect of budget support, the reservations and warnings issued by the

Court of Auditors concerning the inherent risks of irregularity, fraud and corruption; reiterates its very firm belief that budget support, while remaining an important channel for external aid, must be subject to robust political, legal and audit-related preconditions.

10. Welcomes the results of the evaluation report of the effectiveness of the EU aid channelled through civil society organisations (CSO-s); draws attention to one of the main recommendations of the report to reduce the negative impact of cumbersome procedures on the effectiveness of the programmes implemented by CSO-s and welcomes that new options are put in place to simplify access to funding;
11. Welcomes the fact that the Commission regards visibility of Union's projects as a key element in good project implementation and that it has been made obligatory to prepare a communication plan for each project.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	7.2.2013
Result of final vote	+: 53 -: 1 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Pino Arlacchi, Sir Robert Atkins, Bastiaan Belder, Franziska Katharina Brantner, Jerzy Buzek, Tarja Cronberg, Arnaud Danjean, Michael Gahler, Ana Gomes, Andrzej Grzyb, Richard Howitt, Anna Ibrisagic, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Jelko Kacin, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Maria Eleni Koppa, Andrey Kovatchev, Eduard Kukan, Vytautas Landsbergis, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Sabine Lösing, Ulrike Lunacek, Mario Mauro, Francisco José Millán Mon, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Norica Nicolai, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Mirosław Piotrowski, Bernd Posselt, Hans-Gert Pöttering, Cristian Dan Preda, Libor Rouček, Tokia Saïfi, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Nikolaos Salavrakos, György Schöpflin, Werner Schulz, Marek Siwiec, Sophocles Sophocleous, Laurence J.A.J. Stassen, Inese Vaidere, Geoffrey Van Orden, Kristian Vigenin, Sir Graham Watson
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Charalampos Angourakis, Marije Cornelissen, Andrew Duff, Diogo Feio, Kinga Gál, Elisabeth Jeggle, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Doris Pack, Marietje Schaake, Indrek Tarand, László Tőkés, Ivo Vajgl