



2021/2106(DEC)

25.1.2022

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 2020 - Section III European
Commission and executive agencies
(2021/2106(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Michael Gahler

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Recalls that 2020 was highly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, which required swift and significant modifications of the Union budget in responding to the pandemic and had a substantial impact on the Union's finances; notes furthermore that 2020 was the last year of the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework;
2. Underlines that expenditures in heading 4 'Global Europe' are considered high-risk, except for budget support payment; notes that most errors found by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in this area concern absence of essential supporting documents, non-compliance with public procurement rules, costs not incurred and ineligible costs and calls on the Commission to improve this track record; fully supports the recommendations formulated by the ECA and calls on the Commission to take the necessary steps so that international organisations provide the ECA with complete, unlimited and timely access to documents necessary to carry out their task in accordance with the TFEU;
3. Stresses that the Union in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic secured financial support for partner countries and fragile populations amounting to more than EUR 40 billion; stresses the need to improve visibility and communication concerning the substantial support the Union has provided in partner countries during the COVID-pandemics; welcomes Team Europe efforts in addressing the immediate effects of the health crisis and the resulting humanitarian needs in the partner countries, as well as its contribution to the COVAX Facility which provides fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines in low- and middle-income countries;
4. Strongly 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;
5. Notes the ECA's Special Report "Reducing grand corruption in Ukraine" focused on the Union's contributions to anti-corruption and judicial reforms between 2016-2019; is concerned that grand corruption is still prevalent in Ukraine and has negative effects on the rule of law and economic development in the country; notes, however, that in comparison to the period before 2014 the country has clearly developed positively through huge efforts of real political reformers, civil society activities and comprehensive Union support and cooperation to this end; calls for implementing ECA's recommendations to the Commission, the EEAS and the European Advisory Mission in Ukraine;
6. Is concerned about continued destruction and confiscation of Union-funded projects in the West Bank; reminds of the position of the Council, which expressed its commitment to ensure that all agreements between Israel and the EU must unequivocally and explicitly indicate the inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, as well as to continued implementation of existing Union legislation and bilateral

arrangements applicable to settlement products; calls on the Commission to establish the necessary legal and technical arrangements to guarantee that the geographical scope of the EU-Israel agreement under Horizon Europe for the 2021-2027 period will be limited to the territory of Israel as defined by international law in 1967 and to secure compensation from the Israeli authorities for the destruction and confiscation of EU-funded projects in the West Bank, as requested by the European Parliament in its resolution of September 2018;

7. Notes with concern the continuous complicated situation in Belarus and that it is important to review Union funding and ensure that it is not directed to Lukashenko regime, but towards support of civil society in Belarus; notes that Frontex needs to be sufficiently funded to secure Union's outside border with Belarus;
8. Recognises the key role performed by UNRWA in providing Palestine refugees with vital services, including health and education, in the Middle East; commends the results of the study on Palestinian school books performed by the Georg Eckert Institute, which confirms that they adhere to UNESCO standards and adopt criteria which are prominent in international education discourse;
9. Considers that, in comparison to 2020, the budget line structure of the European Neighbourhood for the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework is oversimplified, since it only includes two lines, respectively for the Southern Neighbourhood and the Eastern Partnership; regrets that such a simplified structure does not allow the budgetary authority to properly perform its scrutiny role in the annual discharge procedure; believes that the financial needs of each of the two geographical areas should be addressed at least by three budget lines, respectively targeting political, development and security related matters.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	25.1.2022
Result of final vote	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">+:</div> <div>57</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">-:</div> <div>12</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">0:</div> <div>9</div> </div>
Members present for the final vote	<p>Alviina Alametsä, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, François Alfonsi, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Anna Bonfrisco, Reinhard Bütikofer, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Susanna Ceccardi, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Katalin Cseh, Tanja Fajon, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Kinga Gál, Sunčana Glavak, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Márton Gyöngyösi, Balázs Hidvéghi, Sandra Kalniete, Peter Kofod, Stelios Kouloglou, Andrius Kubilius, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Leopoldo López Gil, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Jaak Madison, Claudiu Manda, Lukas Mandl, Thierry Mariani, Pedro Marques, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Jörg Meuthen, Sven Mikser, Francisco José Millán Mon, Javier Nart, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Urmas Paet, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Manu Pineda, Giuliano Pisapia, Thijs Reuten, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Andreas Schieder, Radosław Sikorski, Jordi Solé, Sergei Stanishev, Tineke Strik, Hermann Tertsch, Dragoș Tudorache, Harald Vilimsky, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou, Željana Zovko</p>
Substitutes present for the final vote	Özlem Demirel, Assita Kanko, Karsten Lucke, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Mick Wallace
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Karin Karlsbro, Ivan Štefanec

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

57	+
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Márton Gyöngyösi
PPE	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Traian Băsescu, Michael Gahler, Sunčana Glavak, Sandra Kalniete, Andrius Kubilius, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Leopoldo López Gil, Antonio López-Istúriz White, David McAllister, Lukas Mandl, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Radosław Sikorski, Ivan Štefanec, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Željana Zovko
Renew	Petras Auštrevičius, Katalin Cseh, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Karin Karlsbro, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Nathalie Loiseau, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Dragoș Tudorache
S&D	Maria Arena, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Tanja Fajon, Raphaël Glucksmann, Karsten Lucke, Claudiu Manda, Pedro Marques, Sven Mikser, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Giuliano Pisapia, Thijs Reuten, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Andreas Schieder, Sergei Stanishev
The Left	Mick Wallace
Verts/ALE	Alviina Alametsä, François Alfonsi, Reinhard Bütikofer, Jordi Solé, Tineke Strik, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Salima Yenbou

12	-
ECR	Anna Fotyga, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Hermann Tertsch, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers
ID	Peter Kofod, Jaak Madison, Thierry Mariani, Jörg Meuthen, Harald Vilimsky
NI	Kostas Papadakis

9	0
ECR	Assita Kanko
ID	Anna Bonfrisco, Susanna Ceccardi
NI	Kinga Gál, Balázs Hidvéghi
The Left	Özlem Demirel, Stelios Kouloglou, Manu Pineda, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention