



*Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Chair*

28.2.2022

Mr Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair
Committee on Budgets

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

Dear Mr Chair,

Under the procedure referred to above, the Committee on Foreign Affairs has been asked to submit an opinion to your committee. At its meeting of 25 January 2022, the committee decided to send the opinion in the form of a letter. The AFET Committee considered the matter at its meeting of 28/02/2022 and adopted the opinion at that meeting¹.

Yours sincerely,

David McAllister

¹ The following were present for the final vote: David McAllister (Chair), Urmas Paet (Vice-Chair), Sergei Stanishev (Vice-Chair), Željana Zovko (Vice-Chair), Michael Gahler (rapporteur for opinion), Alviina Alametsä, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, François Alfonsi, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Anna Bonfrisco, Reinhard Bütikofer, Traian Băsescu, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Susanna Ceccardi, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Özlem Demirel, Tanja Fajon, Anna Fotyga, Giorgos Georgiou, Sunčana Glavak, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Evin Incir, Sandra Kalniete, Peter Kofod, Stelios Kouloglou, Andrey Kovatchev, Andrius Kubilius, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Dietmar Köster, Hélène Laporte, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Karsten Lucke, Leopoldo López Gil, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Claudiu Manda, Lukas Mandl, Thierry Mariani, Pedro Marques, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Javier Nart, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Manu Pineda, Giuliano Pisapia, Thijs Reuten, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Isabel Santos, Andreas Schieder, Radosław Sikorski, Jordi Solé, Tineke Strik, Dominik Tarczyński, Dragoș Tudorache, Hilde Vautmans, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou and Bernhard Zimniok.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Calls for ambitious budget 2023 in the area of external action and defence that will enable the EU to face rising external challenges and threats;
2. Calls on reinforcing EU's global response to the COVID-19 crisis; welcomes the EU's leading role in international vaccination efforts and calls for equitable access to vaccines for the most fragile countries;
3. Recalls the strategic importance of enlargement policy in the Western Balkans; underlines the key contribution of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) and Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) to promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights, political and economic reforms, peacebuilding, reconciliation, mediation and sustainable development; calls, in this regard, for adequate funding for the Western Balkans, as well as for Turkish civil society and the countries of the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood under the Heading 6;
4. Reminds that the EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) foresees a strong conditionality and funding must be modulated or even suspended in the case of significant regression or persistent lack of progress in the area of the so-called "fundamentals", notably in the field of the rule of law and fundamental rights;
5. Considers that 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 decision-making role and scrutiny in the annual budgetary 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;
6. Emphasises that the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights at global level is a key objective of the EU foreign policy agenda; asks therefore to strengthen the budget for election observation missions, given their role in consolidating democratic institutions and bringing stability in fragile countries, as well as to reinforce the budgets for the preservation of human rights and the support to civil society organisations, including the ones committed to the empowerment of women;
7. Calls for increased and predictable funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in 2023, in order to preserve a consistent and uninterrupted delivery of vital services to millions of Palestine refugees and in recognition of its essential role at contributing to regional stability at a time of political uncertainty in the region;
8. Welcomes the EU readiness to tackle most pressing global challenges by investing to the sustainable development of the global infrastructure in particular in green technologies and digital connectivity through the EU Global Gateway; calls on the Commission to work on an effective governance of the EU Global Gateway, with the aim to improve internal coordination, cooperation with the private sector, coordination with Team

Europa, as well as with the European Parliament; calls on the Commission to duly involve the Parliament in the decisions on the Global Gateway investment programmes and keep it regularly informed about the respective developments, including budgetary implications as they unfold;

9. Underlines the urgent need for reinforcing and speeding up the EU's financial contribution to the global action against the climate crisis and biodiversity loss in view of calamitous consequence of ongoing climate change;
10. Highlights the importance of an increase in funding for including and streamlining the fight against malicious interference and disinformation and an effective institutional set-up within the EU such as for the implementation of those structures identified in the recently adopted INGE report, including a dedicated EEAS StratCom Far East team, a Commission taskforce and a European Centre for Interference Threats and Information Integrity;
11. Calls for gender mainstreaming in the 2023 budget and stresses the need for proper and measurable indicators and a specific methodology, as well as regular monitoring, to analyse the impact of the EU budget on gender equality and effectively implement gender budgeting in EU external action; emphasises the need for adequate resources to finance the implementation of the GAP III;
12. Emphasises the need for coherence, accountability and efficiency of financing the EU external action; calls for increased transparency and democratic scrutiny of EFIs' funding through strategic steering by the Parliament and an enhanced geopolitical dialogue between the Parliament and the Commission;
13. Emphasises the importance of providing adequate financial support by Member States and through the European Defence Fund to frame for a strong European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in particular ambitious and effective civilian CSDP missions, and military CSDP operations and to increase the EU's security and strategic autonomy; considers that such efforts would increase the Union's ability to contribute to international stability, security and peace, in particular as regards the promotion and respect for international law, in close cooperation with the UN, NATO, OSCE and allied countries, or if needed, alone.