



*Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Chair*

24.1.2024

Mr Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair
Committee on Budgets

Subject: Opinion on Guidelines for the 2025 Budget – Section III (2023/2220(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 28 November 2023, the committee decided to send the opinion in the form of a letter.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs considered the matter at its meeting of 23 January 2024¹. 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.

Yours sincerely,

David McAllister

¹ The following were present to the vote: David McAllister (Chair), Željana Zovko (Vice-Chair), Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Attila Ara-Kovács, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Adam Bielan, Theresa Bielowski, Krzysztof Brejza, Reinhard Bütikofer, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Özlem Demirel, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Giorgos Georgiou, Sunčana Glavak, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Christophe Grudler, Bernard Guetta, Márton Gyöngyösi, Arba Kokalari, Dietmar Köster, Andrius Kubilius, Georgios Kyrtos, Ilhan Kyuchuk, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Katrin Langensiepen, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Leopoldo López Gil, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Karsten Lucke, Thierry Mariani, Erik Marquardt, Vangelis Meimarakis, Alessandra Moretti, Javier Nart, Matjaž Nemeč, Juozas Olekas, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Thijs Reuten, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Christian Sagartz, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos Mounir Satouri, Jordi Solé, Tineke Strik, Dominik Tarczyński, Hermann Tertsch, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Mick Wallace, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Tomáš Zdechovský, Bernhard Zimniok

SUGGESTIONS

1. Notes that the majority of external action spending is concentrated under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III); reiterates the urgent need to increase funding, particularly in crisis regions where the needs are greatest; reiterates therefore its call for a substantial increase in Heading 6 to address the various challenges in the neighbourhood, invest in partnerships and strengthen the geopolitical position of the EU; deplores the fact that the MFF review has not been completed and deems this to be insufficient; underlines the vital importance of a stronger, more unified and coherent communication by the EU institutions with regards to the funds provided by the Union;
2. Emphasises the need for continued efforts to finance the immediate funding needs for Ukraine, following the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression by Russia; therefore welcomes the Ukraine Facility for a total amount of up to EUR 50 billion for the period 2024 to 2027 and urges the European Council to find agreement;
3. Reiterates that an adequate level of funding should be maintained for the Southern Neighbourhood in 2025 to support political, economic and social reforms in the region; highlights the pressing need to vastly increase humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians in the Gaza strip due to the unfolding humanitarian crisis, matched with a prudent distribution mechanism fully in line with EU priorities to prevent criminal use of European funds;
4. Insists on continuous and sustained financial and administrative support to the accession countries; recalls the need to upgrade the existing accession tools, their funding and conditionality with an improved monitoring mechanism in all fields underlined in recent EU evaluation reports to speed up beneficiaries' transformation and sustainable incremental progress towards EU membership which achieving better compliance with EU norms, with due attention to rule of law reforms, for a more seamless accession; in this context insists on a mid-term review of the IPA III, increasing accession-related support for the Western Balkans and the inclusion of Moldova and Ukraine among its beneficiaries;
5. Underlines the need for the DG NEAR and the European External Action Service to be provided with adequate financial and human resources in order to promote peace, prosperity, security, and the EU values and interests in its neighbourhood and across the globe; while adhering to their own commitments on coherent representation and efficient use of resources; recalls that their administrative expenditure should be covered under the Heading 7.