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on implementing measures for the system of own resources of the European Union
(2014/2020(INI))

Committee on Budgets

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on implementing measures for the system of own resources of the European Union (2014/2020(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council regulation (05600/2014),
 - having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council regulation (COM(2011)0740),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 311 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C7-0047/2014),
 - having regard to its resolution of 29 March 2007 on the future of the European Union's own resources¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 8 June 2011 on investing in the future: a new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for a competitive, sustainable and inclusive Europe²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2012 on the Multiannual Financial Framework and own resources³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2012 in the interest of achieving a positive outcome of the Multiannual Financial Framework approval procedure⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2013 on the European Council conclusions of 7-8 February 2013 concerning the Multiannual Financial Framework⁵,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2013 on the political agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020⁶,
 - having regard to the second subparagraph of Rule 81(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A7 0000/2014),
- A. whereas, according to Article 311 TFEU, the Council, acting by means of regulation in accordance with a special legislative procedure, shall lay down implementing measures for the Union's own resources system in so far as this is provided for in the decision laying down the provisions relating to the system of own resources of the Union;
- B. whereas Article 311 TFEU also stipulates that the budget shall be financed wholly from

¹ OJ C 27 E, 31.1.2008, p. 214.

² OJ C 380 E, 11.12.2012, p. 89.

³ OJ C 332 E, 15.11.2013, p. 42.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0360.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0078.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0304.

own resources and allows the Council to establish new categories of own resources or abolish an existing category, providing thus the legal basis for an in-depth reform of the own resources system;

- C. whereas Parliament has continuously called for the EU budget to be financed wholly by genuine own resources, as stipulated in the Treaty; whereas it has regularly highlighted the shortcomings and limits of the existing system of own resources, the lack of transparency and high complexity of which make it totally incomprehensible to European citizens, who ultimately bear the consequences;
 - D. whereas national contributions to the EU budget, which amount nowadays to around 85 % of the total EU revenue, cannot be considered as a genuine own resource as they simply constitute transfers from national treasuries; whereas this situation has reinforced, over decades, the logic of ‘fair return’ that has also clearly prevailed in the conclusions of the European Council of 7-8 February 2013 on the MFF 2014-2020 and has largely prevented a structural reform of the EU budget;
 - E. whereas Parliament has consistently manifested its support for the Commission proposals, presented in June 2011, which – by reducing the share of national contributions to the EU budget to a maximum of 40 %, abolishing the current VAT-based contribution, creating two new and genuine own resources and replacing all rebates and correction mechanisms by a system of lump sums for the period 2014-2020 – took a step in the right direction by bringing the EU budget revenue side into line with the letter and spirit of the Treaty, and which, as such, from the outset gained the support of an overwhelming majority in Parliament;
 - F. whereas despite its discontent with the inability of Council to progress on the reform of the system of own resources, Parliament eventually gave its consent to the MFF regulation in November 2013, following also the agreement by Council on the establishment of the High-Level Group on Own Resources; whereas, on that occasion, the Lithuanian Presidency declared its commitment to organise the inaugural meeting of this Group on 18-19 December 2013; whereas, due to delay within the Council to decide on its three representatives to this High-Level Group, this meeting has not yet taken place;
 - G. whereas the High-Level Group on Own Resources aims at producing a first assessment of the current system’s shortcomings by the end of 2014, with a final outcome in 2016 to be assessed at an inter-institutional conference in the presence of national parliaments; whereas the High-Level Group shall examine all aspects of the reform of the own resources system with a view of providing the Commission with the necessary means to propose a successful reform for the period covered by the next Multiannual Financial Framework;
1. Welcomes the Council’s agreement to lay down implementing measures for the Union’s own resources as provided for in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
 2. Deplores the fact that the Council has not been able to make any progress on the reform of the own resources system on the basis of the legislative proposals put forward by the Commission;

3. Maintains its call for reform of the own resources system of the European Union in order to make it simple, transparent, visible and understandable to EU citizens, thereby reinforcing the EU citizens' link to the European project and, at the same time, reducing the burden on Member States' national treasuries;
4. Places high expectations on the work of the High-Level Group on Own Resources, which it believes offers a unique opportunity to overcome the current blockage of the reform of the system of own resources; strongly regrets that the High-Level Group has not yet started its work; calls for its inaugural meeting to be convened without delay, in compliance with the objectives and the calendar set out in the joint declaration establishing the High Level Group on Own Resources annexed to the MFF (2014-2020) regulation;
5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.