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DRAFT REPORT

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024
(11565/2023 – C9-0336/2023 – 2023/0264(BUD))

Part 1: Motion for a resolution

Committee on Budgets

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024 (11565/2023 – C9-0336/2023 – 2023/0264(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,
- having regard to Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2020/2053 of 14 December 2020 on the system of own resources of the European Union and repealing Decision 2014/335/EU, Euratom¹,
- having regard to its interim report on the proposal for a mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027²,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 20 June 2023 for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (COM(2023)0037),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 June 2023 entitled ‘Mid-term revision of the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027’ (COM(2023)0336) and the accompanying staff working document (SWD(2023)0336),
- having regard to the proposal of 20 June 2023 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the Ukraine Facility (COM(2023)0338),
- having regard to the proposal of 20 June 2023 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (‘STEP’) and amending Directive 2003/87/EC, Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697 and (EU) 2021/241 (COM(2023)0335),
- having regard to its resolution of 10 May 2023 on the impact on the 2024 EU budget of increasing European Union Recovery Instrument borrowing costs³,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 April 2023 on Parliament’s estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2024⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2022 on upscaling the 2021-2027

¹ OJ L 424, 15.12.2020, p. 1.

² Reference to be added (vote Oct I plenary)

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0194.

⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0127.

multiannual financial framework: a resilient EU budget fit for new challenges⁵,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2022/2496 of 15 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027⁶,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027⁷ and to the joint declarations agreed between Parliament, the Council and the Commission in this context⁸ and the related unilateral declarations⁹,
- having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources¹⁰,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014 and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹¹ (the ‘Financial Regulation’),
- having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the 2024 financial year, which the Commission adopted on 5 July 2023 (COM(2023)0300),
- having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the 2024 financial year, which the Council adopted on 5 September 2023¹² and forwarded to Parliament on 8 September 2023 (11565/2023 – C9-0336/2023),
- having regard to Rule 94 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Development, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, the Committee on Transport and Tourism, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Committee on Fisheries, the Committee on Culture and Education, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,

⁵ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0119.

⁶ OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 11.

⁷ OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.

⁸ OJ C 444I, 22.12.2020.

⁹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0357.

¹⁰ OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

¹¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

¹² OJ C 317, 7.9.2023, p. 3.

- having regard to the letter from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A9-0000/2023),

Section III – European Commission

1. Stresses that Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought further substantial economic and social consequences for the people of Europe, pushing up inflation, generating energy insecurity, driving up food and energy prices and resulting in a cost of living crisis for millions; underlines that the new geopolitical and economic context has given rise to new policy needs, notably in climate and energy, social investments, defence and industrial policy;
2. Recalls that the Commission, in drawing up the draft budget for 2024 (the “DB”) based on the existing multiannual financial framework (“MFF”) regulation, explicitly underlined the “limits” of the framework “after three years of unprecedented crises” and stressed that the regulation was agreed “in a completely different geopolitical and economic context”;
3. Emphasises, furthermore, that a fortnight after publishing the DB, the Commission tabled a proposal to revise the MFF regulation, alongside legislative proposals to establish the Ukraine Facility and the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP), stating that the package must be in place by 1 January 2024 and therefore in time for the 2024 budget;
4. Notes that, despite the Commission’s proposal to revise the MFF, the Council chose to formulate its position on the 2024 budget assuming no change to the framework; deeply regrets that, despite the drastic constraints, the Council elected to cut commitment appropriations in the DB by EUR 772 million and payment appropriations by EUR 515 million across the MFF headings; considers that the cuts proposed by the Council are not driven by an objective assessment of needs or absorption capacity and run counter, in many instances, to shared policy ambitions and political agreements; decides, therefore, to restore appropriations on all lines cut by the Council to the level of the DB;
5. Recalls that the budget can only be adopted in accordance with the MFF regulation in force; reiterates its firm conviction that a revised MFF regulation must provide the framework for the 2024 budget and, in order to ensure democratic decision-making in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty, considers it appropriate for Parliament to formulate its position on the basis of a revised framework; decides, therefore, to draw up its reading on the 2024 budget in alignment with its interim report on the MFF revision;

Special Instruments

6. Recalls that the Commission has proposed to establish two new special instruments over and above the MFF ceilings - the European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI) to better manage debt repayment costs and the Ukraine Facility designed to ensure a longer-term structural solution to Ukraine’s funding needs - and to increase appropriations for the Flexibility Instrument and for the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve;

7. Reiterates its assessment, now shared by the Commission, that a structural solution must be found for the repayment of EURI borrowing costs, which are estimated at EUR 4 billion in the DB as against the initially programmed EUR 2,1 billion and would therefore exhaust the Flexibility Instrument and use part of the Single Margin Instrument in 2024 without the MFF revision;
8. Notes that the Council, in its position on the 2024 budget, reduces appropriations set aside for EURI borrowing costs; shares the Council's hope that borrowing costs are ultimately lower than forecast in the DB, but insists that, in accordance with the principle of budgetary prudence, the budgetary authority should rely on the Commission's objective forecasting and the updates in the Amending Letter; proposes, therefore, to restore the DB amount and, in line with its MFF interim report, to delete the line from Heading 2b and place the full amount in the EURI special instrument over and above the MFF ceilings;
9. Welcomes the proposal to establish the Ukraine Facility and for the Ukraine Reserve to be mobilised by the budgetary authority in the annual budgetary procedure; insists that the budgetary nomenclature must provide for the necessary granularity and transparency to ensure proper oversight and decisions by the budgetary authority; proposes, therefore, the creation of new budget lines that would fulfil this purpose;
10. Underlines that budgetary flexibility has been key for the Union to respond to unforeseen events and to adjust its spending priorities in light of evolving political and economic needs; highlights, however, that the Union budget is not equipped with the flexibility it requires; reiterates, therefore, its view that the Flexibility Instrument should be increased by EUR 1,457 billion in 2024 in line with its MFF interim report;
11. Considers that demands on the SEAR are unlikely to lessen and, therefore, that reinforcing the SEAR is crucial to enable the Union to act in emergency situations caused by major natural disasters or public health crises in Member States and accession countries and also to support non-EU countries suffering from conflicts, refugee crises or natural disasters; increases, therefore, allocations for the SEAR in 2024 by EUR 1,092 million in 2024 in line with its MFF interim report; maintains appropriations for the European Global Adjustment Fund and the Brexit Adjustment Reserve as proposed in the DB;

Heading 1 - Single market, Innovation and Digital

12. Recalls that programmes under Heading 1 play a key role in supporting research and innovation, in boosting the competitiveness of the EU economy, in supporting SMEs and in investing in cross-border infrastructure, thus contributing significantly to the green and digital transitions and to driving growth, economic development and job creation;
13. Underlines that, as part of the STEP proposal designed to secure the open strategic autonomy of the Union, reduce dependence on non-EU countries and boost investment in key strategic sectors, additional appropriations are to be allocated to InvestEU and to the European Innovation Council (EIC); proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for the InvestEU guarantee by EUR 1,05 billion and for the EIC by EUR 125 million in 2024 in line with its MFF interim report; proposes, furthermore, to make available again

EUR 500 million in research commitments under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation for the EIC under Horizon Europe, in addition to the EUR 95 million included in the DB;

14. Recalls that the recently agreed Chips Act has a significant impact on the budget under Heading 1, in particular for Horizon Europe and for Digital Europe; underlines that, in accordance with the political agreement on the Chips Act, an additional EUR 50 million is required to meet funding needs over the period 2024 to 2027; proposes, therefore, to cover 25 % of that shortfall by allocating EUR 12,5 million to the Chips Joint Undertaking in 2024;
15. Recalls that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is key to boosting investment in high-performance, sustainable trans-European networks and to decarbonising the EU economy, thereby accelerating the green transition and promoting interconnectivity; underlines that CEF Transport has been vital in supporting transport infrastructure in and towards Ukraine (“solidarity lanes”) and in enabling the transport of critical goods in both directions and welcomes the decision to associate Ukraine to the programme; proposes, to increase appropriations for CEF Transport by EUR 100 million above the DB in 2024 in order to support these aims;
16. Stresses that a well-functioning Single Market is critical for the Union’s competitiveness and to enhance access to markets for EU businesses; emphasises that SMEs in particular have been hit hard by high inflation and energy prices and proposes, as a result, an increase of EUR 10 million above the DB for the SME strand of the Single Market programme; reiterates, furthermore, the programme’s role in contributing to human, animal and plant health; proposes, in that regard, an increase of EUR 5 million to ensure effective implementation of veterinary programmes for animal diseases and zoonosis, in particular to combat bovine tuberculosis;
17. Underscores that the green and digital transitions and a refocusing of industrial policy require significant investment in skills development, for example through the Net Zero Academies; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for skills development under the Single Market programme by EUR 10 million;
18. Highlights the vital role that Horizon Europe plays in supporting research and innovation and in helping to turn research results and innovative ideas into products and services that boost the global competitiveness of EU business; recalls that the programme remains heavily over-subscribed and is therefore unable to support a large number of research projects evaluated as ‘excellent’; proposes, therefore, to increase allocations for the programme by a total of EUR 140 million compared to the DB (excluding the STEP-related increases), with reinforcements for the European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and Clusters ‘Health’, ‘Culture’ ‘Climate, Energy and Mobility’ and ‘Food’;
19. Underlines the important role played by the decentralised agencies active under this heading; proposes to increase appropriations and staffing for the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity and the European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators in line with their identified needs and expanding mandates;
20. Reinforces Heading 1 by EUR 1 454 239 500 in commitment appropriations above the

DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions) and by EUR 1 684 239500 compared to the Council reading; points out that EUR 1 175 000 000 of its reinforcements are specific to STEP; underscores that, in line with its MFF interim report, the ceiling for Heading 1 would increase by EUR 1,375 billion in 2024;

Heading 2a - Economic, social and territorial cohesion

21. Underlines the key role cohesion policy plays in delivering on EU policy priorities and boosting the EU economy by contributing to fair and sustainable growth and development, promoting economic and social convergence between countries and regions, supporting the green and digital transitions, and fostering innovation and employment; calls on the Commission and the Member States to accelerate implementation of cohesion policy;
22. Stresses the importance of adequate funding for programmes under Heading 2a in order to ensure that regional policy, as the EU's main investment policy, delivers on its objectives; underlines that local and regional authorities are key to ensuring effective implementation of EU programmes and calls for the local and regional level, on the one hand, and the EU level, on the other, to be strengthened, including through adequate financing for relevant actions and institutions;
23. Accepts the Council position with respect to Heading 2a;

Heading 2b - Resilience and values

24. Underlines that placing EURI borrowing costs over and above the MFF ceilings would have the effect of restoring some margin within Heading 2b and creating budgetary space in the Flexibility and Single Margin Instruments; underlines that programmes under Heading 2b have been impacted by the EURI line's presence within the same heading since the Commission has been de facto prevented from proposing reinforcements where they are needed;
25. Points, in this regard, to the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programmes, which play a vital role in supporting learning mobility opportunities, improving people's skills and employability and promoting social inclusion; emphasises that both programmes aim to boost participation rates among people with fewer opportunities - an objective that is challenged by soaring inflation and the increased cost of living; is committed to ensuring that Erasmus+ does not become a de facto selective programme open only to those who can afford to participate and recalls that the Commission is required to put in place financial support measures for people with fewer opportunities; proposes, therefore, an increase of EUR 100 million for Erasmus+ and EUR 2 million for the ESC above DB specifically to ensure the programmes are accessible for all;
26. Underlines the importance of a stronger Health Union and enhanced preparedness in post-pandemic Europe, as well as the need to better understand and treat long COVID; highlights the vital role that the EU4Health programme plays in this respect; proposes, therefore, to increase the programme's appropriations by EUR 20 million above DB, including to help offset redeployments towards the European Health Emergency and Response Authority;

27. Is alarmed by the growing impact of natural disasters in Europe and its neighbourhood and concerned about the EU's ability to respond effectively; underlines that these disasters are often linked to climate change and are therefore likely to occur with greater frequency and intensity in the future; increases, therefore, appropriations for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism by EUR 20 million above DB in order to ensure an effective response and protect human lives;
28. Underscores that soaring energy prices and inflation, following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, have had a significant impact on the cultural and creative sectors, which are often made up of small organisations and individual artists; proposes, therefore, to increase financing for the Creative Europe programme by EUR 25 million above DB, with EUR 15 million for the Culture strand and EUR 10 million for the Cross-Sectoral strand, which plays a vital role in tackling disinformation and promoting media literacy;
29. Reiterates the importance of Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme in promoting European values and citizens' rights, in fostering active civic engagement, in building resilient societies, in combatting gender-based violence and in supporting the key principles of democracy, the rule of law, solidarity, inclusiveness, justice, non-discrimination and equality; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for the programme by EUR 6 million above DB, with reinforcements for the 'citizens' engagement and participation', Daphne and 'Union values' strands;
30. Deems it necessary to reinforce support to the Turkish-Cypriot line by EUR 2 million above DB in order to finance the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and support the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage;
31. Underlines the significance of the social dimension in the Union budget and the need for effective social dialogue and proper information and training for workers' organisations; increases, therefore, financing for the relevant lines by EUR 1 million each above DB;
32. Recalls the important role played by the decentralised agencies under Heading 2b; increases funding and staffing levels for the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Labour Authority and the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation in line with the agencies' identified needs; proposes, furthermore, to reinforce the European Public Prosecutor's Office in terms of financing and staff to allow the body to fulfil its duties and protect the Union's financial interests;
33. Reinforces Heading 2b overall by EUR 199 485 306 in commitment appropriations above DB levels (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions) and by EUR 812 302 190 compared to the Council reading; recalls that, in line with its MFF interim report; EURI costs would not be considered under Heading 2b;

Heading 3 - Natural Resources and Environment

34. Underlines that the STEP proposal includes additional commitment appropriations in 2024 for the Innovation Fund under Heading 3 and a commensurate increase in the ceiling; considers that the proposed allocation for the Innovation Fund marks important progress towards its full budgetisation; proposes, therefore, to create a new budget line for the Innovation Fund, with appropriations of EUR 1,25 billion in line with its MFF

interim report;

35. Reiterates its concern about the negative impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security and affordability and about farmers' ability to withstand inflationary pressure and increased input prices; emphasises the need to help new and young farmers as a structural solution and thereby ensure the sustainability of the sector and generational renewal; proposes, therefore, to increase income support to young farmers by EUR 40 million above DB;
36. Underlines the importance of school schemes under the Common Agricultural Policy in ensuring broad access to healthy and nutritious food for children and points out that the schemes' reach is impacted by rising food prices; decides, therefore, to increase by EUR 5 million above DB support for the schemes;
37. Underlines the central role that the LIFE programme plays in delivering on the European Green Deal and achieving the Union's climate neutrality goal by reducing emissions and increasing the use of renewable energy, creating a circular economy and reversing the alarming trend of biodiversity loss; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for the programme by EUR 30 million above DB;
38. Recalls that, traditionally, an Amending Letter will complete the picture regarding available resources under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and that the approach to amendments can be adjusted accordingly in the course of the conciliation;
39. Reinforces Heading 3 by EUR 1 325 000 000 in commitment appropriations above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions) and by EUR 1 335 000 000 compared to the Council reading; points out that EUR 1 250 000 000 of its reinforcements are specific to STEP; underscores that, in line with its MFF interim report, the ceiling for Heading 3 would also increase by EUR 1,25 billion in 2024;

Heading 4 - Migration and Border Management

40. Underlines that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, armed conflicts and instability in neighbouring regions, as well as poverty and underlying trends in economic development, demographic changes, globalisation in transport and communications continue to push people to come to the Union for refuge, in search of a better life or to reunite with close family members, placing significant pressure on programmes and agencies under Heading 4; recalls, in that regard, its view that financing under the Heading should be increased by EUR 250 million in 2024, in line with its MFF interim report;
41. Stresses that the war has vastly increased pressure on asylum systems in the Member States and that the Union must provide longer-term support to the host Member States to facilitate the reception and integration of refugees from Ukraine, face the recent migration trends via the Mediterranean route and anticipate the financial implications of a timely agreement on the Pact on Asylum and Migration (AMIF); decides, therefore, to reinforce the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund by EUR 110 million above DB in 2024 given AMIF's positive contribution in providing immediate support to refugees;

42. Recalls the essential role played by the European Union Agency for Asylum in supporting Member States with respect to asylum and international protection procedures; proposes to increase staff and financing levels for the agency in line with its heavier workload;
43. Stresses that effective and fair management and protection of the Union's external borders are key to ensuring the security of the Union, guaranteeing the smooth and efficient implementation of the Union's migration and asylum policy and preserving the free movement of people within the Union and the proper functioning of the Schengen area; stresses, moreover, the need to better prevent irregular migration to protect vulnerable people from smuggling and trafficking networks and address the instrumentalisation of migrants as part of hybrid attacks; underlines the vital role that the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) plays in that regard; notes that the Commission proposes to reinforce the BMVI above financial programming levels in the DB, though points out that this 'reinforcement' only partially offsets repeated redeployments from the BMVI to finance revised agency mandates; proposes to increase appropriations for the BMVI by EUR 60 million above DB, including to support Romania and Bulgaria in their preparations for accession to the Schengen area;
44. Highlights the need for a further increase in appropriations and staff for eu-LISA to ensure that the agency can implement critical internal security and border management projects; underlines the need for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to have the requisite resources to carry out its operational activities effectively and decides, therefore, to restore the DB for the agency;
45. Reinforces Heading 4 overall by EUR 173 941 500 in commitment appropriations above the DB and by EUR 193 941 500 compared to the Council reading; underscores that, in line with its MFF interim report, the ceiling for Heading 4 would also increase by EUR 250 million in 2024;

Heading 5 - Security and Defence

46. Underlines that defence challenges have surged since the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, rendering support to the defence sector more important than ever to ensure Europe is a safe continent;
47. Points out that significant steps forward have been taken with the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act on the defence demand side and the Act in Support of Ammunition Production¹³ on the supply side; notes that the two regulations exhaust all Heading 5 margins and require use of the Flexibility Instrument in 2024, in addition to substantial redeployments from the European Defence Fund (EDF);
48. Stresses that the STEP proposal includes additional appropriations for the EDF; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for the EDF by EUR 625 million in 2024 in line with its MFF interim report;
49. Notes the importance of 'military mobility' in enabling Member States to provide rapid

¹³ Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023 on supporting ammunition production (ASAP) (OJ L 185, 24.7.2023, p. 7).

support in the context of the war; underlines that the programme is oversubscribed, has substantial absorption capacity and will be fully committed by the end of 2023; decides, therefore, to increase appropriations for ‘military mobility’ by EUR 45 million above DB;

50. Reinforces Heading 5 overall by EUR 670 000 000 in commitment appropriations above the DB and by EUR 687 000 000 compared to the Council; points out that EUR 625 000 000 of its reinforcements are specific to STEP; underscores that, in line with its MFF interim report, the ceiling for Heading 5 would also increase by EUR 625 million in 2024;

Heading 6 - Neighbourhood and the World

51. Emphasises that, in particular following Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, the international context has deteriorated rapidly as a result of the food, energy and economic crises, which have dramatically increased pressure on Heading 6; deplores the fact that funding under Heading 6 was woefully inadequate from the outset of the MFF and that the MFF did not factor in continued funding for the needs of refugees from Syria, Iraq and other countries, leaving almost no scope to cope with additional challenges;
52. Notes that the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)-Global Europe cushion has been depleted very quickly and used beyond its core purpose of responding to emerging challenges and priorities, while the humanitarian aid budget has relied heavily on mobilisation of the severely stretched SEAR; reiterates, in that regard, that financing under the Heading should be increased by EUR 2,875 billion in 2024, in line with its MFF interim report;
53. Stresses the importance of the Southern Neighbourhood line in supporting political, economic and social reforms in the region, in providing assistance to refugees, in particular Syrian and Palestinian refugees, and in enabling support along the southern migration routes; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for the line by EUR 650 million above DB, including to ensure predictable funding for UNWRA;
54. Underlines that the war has had a particularly significant effect on countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood, such as Moldova, that have provided shelter and assistance to refugees fleeing the war and faced the knock-on effects of sky-high inflation and energy prices; underlines the importance of sustained support for candidate countries in implementing the necessary accession-related reforms and in enhancing their resilience and preventing and countering hybrid threats; decides, therefore, to increase appropriations by EUR 450 million above DB for the Eastern Neighbourhood; proposes, furthermore, to increase accession-related support under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA III) by EUR 50 million in 2024 for the Western Balkans;
55. Shares the Council’s assessment that the Commission should have factored humanitarian aid needs resulting from the war into the DB; considers that, given the highly challenging international context, humanitarian aid needs in 2024 are likely to be more substantial than estimated by the Council, in particular since humanitarian aid to Ukraine will continue to be covered under Heading 6 rather than the Ukraine Facility; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations for humanitarian aid by EUR 550 million compared to the DB;

56. Recalls that the NDICI cushion is designed to enable the Union to respond in an agile and effective manner to a changing external policy landscape and emerging challenges through budgetary flexibility; proposes, therefore, to increase appropriations in the cushion by EUR 800 million above DB in 2024;
57. Underlines its support for the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia and the need to continue relevant actions financed under the EU Trust Fund for Colombia; proposes, therefore, to reinforce appropriations by EUR 10 million above DB for 'The Americas' geographic programme under the NDICI; reiterates, furthermore, its unwavering commitment to protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms globally and increases by EUR 10 million above DB the allocation for the 'fundamental rights and freedoms' thematic programme;
58. Reiterates its commitment to the international dimension of Erasmus+, which enables learning mobility exchanges with partner countries around the world; increases, therefore, appropriations for the international dimension of Erasmus+ by EUR 10 million above DB, split evenly between the NDICI and IPA III;
59. Recalls that the interest due from the EUR 18 billion in MFA+ loans being disbursed to Ukraine in 2023 was to be covered by the Member States, with the Union budget only contributing in the event of available resources; considers that no such resources are available and therefore deletes the line and cuts the appropriations for the MFA+ interest rate subsidy;
60. Reinforces Heading 6 overall by EUR 2 525 000 000 in commitment appropriations above the DB and by EUR 2 407 100 000 compared to the Council reading; underscores that, in line with its MFF interim report, the ceiling for Heading 6 would increase by EUR 2.875 billion in 2024;

Heading 7 - European Public Administration

61. Recalls that spending under Heading 7 should be set at a level that guarantees that the Union has an effective and efficient administration; points out, in that regard, that the Commission's proposal for a revision of the MFF would reduce the need for recourse to the Single Margin Instrument for spending under Heading 7 in 2024;
62. Accepts the Council position for Heading 7 with respect to Section III;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

63. Recalls the importance of pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs) as tools for the formulation of political priorities and the introduction of new initiatives that have the potential to turn into standing Union activities and programmes; adopts, following a careful analysis of all the proposals submitted and taking fully into account the Commission's assessment of their compliance with legal requirements and implementability, a balanced package of PP-PAs that reflects Parliament's political priorities; calls on the Commission to swiftly implement PP-PAs and provide feedback on their performance and results delivered on the ground;

Payments

64. Underlines the need to provide a sufficient level of payment appropriations in the 2024 budget and decides, as a general rule, to reinforce payment appropriations on those lines which are amended in commitment appropriations;

Other Sections

Section I – European Parliament

65. Is aware of the constraints of Heading 7 in the current MFF; recalls that these constraints are the results of the cuts applied by the Council to the Commission's already very low initial proposal when agreeing on the current MFF 2021-2027; expresses its astonishment and deep concern at the Commission's unilateral decision to reduce Parliament's estimates for 2024, which breaks once more the tradition of good cooperation between the two institutions; recalls that the Parliament's estimates were prepared and adopted with particular attention to the Commission's recommendations; against that background, restores the appropriations of its budget for 2024 set at EUR 2 383 401 312, in line with its estimates of revenue and expenditure adopted by the Plenary on 20 April 2023; incorporates budgetary-neutral technical adjustments to reflect updated information which was not available earlier this year;
66. Notes that, while its budget is included under Section I - European Parliament, the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (APPF) is an independent Union body; welcomes the fact that the number of posts allocated to the APPF is clearly identified in the establishment plan and that the specific amount related to its staff is included in the budgetary remarks for both items 1200 and 1400; expects that this information will continue to be disclosed in the future budgets; agrees to remove on that basis Article 502 from the 2024 budget nomenclature onwards;
67. Reiterates the Parliament's priorities for the forthcoming financial year, namely, focusing Parliament's budget on its core functions of co-legislator, acting as one arm of the budgetary authority, representing citizens and scrutinizing the work of other institutions, as well as providing the resources for priority projects on engaging with citizens, green Parliament promoting the saving of resources, accessible Parliament fully respecting gender issues and strengthening security, cyber-security and IT development;
68. In line with its above-mentioned resolution of 20 April 2023 on its estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2024 and taking into account the answers provided by the Secretary-General on 19 July 2023:
 - (a) asks the Bureau to work on a technical solution to allow Members to exercise their right to vote while benefitting from their maternity, paternity or long term sickness leave;
 - (b) reiterates its request to the Bureau to modify the Implementing Measures for Title VII of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS) to ensure the full alignment of the allowances rates incurred in respect of duty travel between Parliament's three places of work between officials, others servants and Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs); acknowledges that the Parliament's responsible services are drafting a proposal in order to resolve this issue and encourages the Bureau to act as soon as the proposal is submitted;
 - (c) regrets the continued opposition of the Bureau to overturning the decisions of 2 October 2000 and 15 December 2014 that explicitly prohibit the participation of APAs in official delegations and committee missions; reiterates its call on the Conference of Presidents and the Bureau, once again, to revise the implementing

provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union and the decision on "Committee missions outside the three places of work"; underlines the fact that such a revision should consider the possibility for APAs, subject to certain conditions, to accompany Members on official Parliament delegations and missions;

- (d) reminds the Bureau that proper information and consultation with the Committee on Budgets before adopting any major decision on building related issues is needed due to their important budgetary implications; welcomes the maintenance policy for Parliament's buildings adopted by the Bureau on 8 March 2021 introducing so called "building passports"; asks the Bureau to explore savings opportunities; calls for a pro-active building policy which must focus on the green renovation of the building stock and guarantee that Parliament strives to maximise energy efficiency and thereby reduces energy consumption and CO2 emissions and the running cost of Parliament's facilities.

Other Sections (Sections IV-X)

69. Condemns the Commission's horizontal approach to reduce the estimates of the institutions in order to adhere to the principle of stable staffing, and to a maximum increase of 2 % for non-salary related expenditure, despite the inflationary pressures for a second year in a row and irrespective of new tasks given to the institutions by the Commission and the co-legislators;
70. Highlights that the largest parts of the institutions' budgets are fixed by statutory or contractual obligations impacted by inflation and that they have no control over inflation rates and increasing energy prices; is concerned about the high cost of living and the increasing prices in Luxembourg, in particular the rising housing costs entailing difficulties for all institutions based in Luxembourg in recruiting staff; requests all institutions based in Luxembourg to address this long-standing issue also with Luxembourg counterparts;
71. Highlights the need for the institutions to have sufficient staff in order to fulfil their mandate; welcomes the continuous efforts made by the institutions to redeploy staff and find additional efficiency gains but recognises the limits of this approach in the current inflationary context when paired simultaneously with increasing responsibilities;
72. Increases, for the following duly justified cases, the level of appropriations or staff above the DB in order to give the institutions enough resources to respect their legal and contractual obligations and perform adequately, efficiently and effectively the growing number of tasks from their mandate; proposes therefore to:
- (a) restore the level of appropriations in line with the estimates of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Ombudsman, by increasing the level of appropriations above the DB for budgetary lines that cover appropriations in relation to contractual and mandatory expenditures;
 - (b) restore the level of appropriations partially in line with the estimates of the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Data Protection

Supervisor and the European External Action Service by increasing the appropriations above the DB for budgetary lines that cover appropriations in relation to contractual and mandatory expenditures;

- (c) increase the establishment plans above the DB with the corresponding appropriations in line with the institutions' requests for the European Data Protection Supervisor and European Data Protection Board to enable them to face new responsibilities and partially in line with the institutions' requests for the European Committee of the Regions to enhance cybersecurity capabilities and the European External Action Service to implement the Strategic Compass, strengthen the crisis response center and enhance cybersecurity and the fight against disinformation.

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- 73. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, together with the amendments to the draft general budget, to the Council, the Commission, the other institutions and bodies concerned and the national parliaments.