



2021/2106(DEC)

27.1.2022

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

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 – Commission and executive agencies
(2021/2106(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Petra Kammerevert

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education 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 in 2020 the total available budget for the Union programmes and actions under the portfolio of Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) amounted to EUR 6 043 million in commitment appropriations (some 7 % more than in 2019); notes that, despite the unavoidable cancellation or postponement of some activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and thanks to the measures taken under the ‘force majeure’ clause, DG EAC achieved most targets in 2020 and executed commitments fully and payments virtually fully, as did the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT) for relevant expenditure;
2. Acknowledges DG EAC’s flexibility and efforts to prevent under-implementation of programmes due to the COVID-19 pandemic; welcomes the measures taken to mitigate the effects of the crisis on applicants and beneficiaries, such as extending application deadlines, extending the duration of ongoing projects, supporting additional costs up to the maximum amounts granted to projects under the applicable legal frameworks, and applying further flexibility towards blended activities; encourages the Commission to assess the feasibility of relaunching, as far as possible, projects that should have been funded but were cancelled solely due to the pandemic;
3. Underlines the crucial role of the Creative Europe programme in funding the cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI) in Europe, especially in times of crisis; regrets, however, that due to the lack of budget for the period 2014-2020, several high quality projects could not be funded at a time where the CCSI needed support;
4. Notes that DG EAC’s overall risk at payment (estimated at EUR 26,83 million out of EUR 2 287 million relevant expenditure) and overall error rate (estimated between 0,5 % and 1 %) remain relatively low in 2020;
5. Notes that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer on-the-spot visits were possible in 2020, leading DG EAC to adapt its supervision and auditing approach and to provide specific guidance on COVID-19 for the reporting by national agencies and independent audit bodies; acknowledges the necessity of such measures; however, underlines that on-the-spot visits cannot be replaced fully as a means for auditing and supervision; calls, therefore, on DG EAC to increase the number of such visits, taking into account travel conditions and limitations;
6. Calls on the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) to continue its efforts to help applicants and beneficiaries of programmes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
7. Welcomes the 2020 update of DG EAC’s Anti-Fraud Strategy aimed at reinforcing the identification and handling of high-risk beneficiaries and of issues such as double funding and conflicts of interest, and commends the measures taken to prevent the risk

of COVID-19-related fraud, including in the design of the next generation of programmes; underlines that Parliament will monitor closely the implementation of the Strategy and calls on DG EAC to communicate its progress regularly to Parliament;

8. Urges DG EAC, DG CONNECT and the EACEA to take without delay all appropriate measures to improve the protection of personal data wherever needed, to minimise the risks linked to third country data transfers, in order to enable the continuation of international operations in 2021 in full compliance with EU data protection law, and to strengthen staff awareness and knowledge of data protection rules, including through targeted training; stresses that protecting the personal data of Member States' citizens must remain a high priority in all relevant activities and must be fully respected;
9. Underlines that cultural, education and media policies and related funding instruments at Union level remain a shared responsibility between DG EAC, DG CONNECT and the EACEA; urges all Directorates-General and Agencies to maintain their level of coordination and smooth cooperation and to improve it wherever possible, in particular by the constructive and meaningful use of digital instruments when this can be helpful for beneficiaries and the projects, aiming at more transparency, less bureaucracy in project implementation and the successful implementation of all policies, as well as the proper management of Union funds.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	27.1.2022
Result of final vote	+: 28 -: 1 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Asim Ademov, Andrea Bocskor, Ilana Cicurel, Gianantonio Da Re, Laurence Farreng, Tomasz Frankowski, Alexis Georgoulis, Sylvie Guillaume, Hannes Heide, Irena Joveva, Petra Kammerevert, Niyazi Kizilyürek, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Predrag Fred Matić, Dace Melbārde, Victor Negrescu, Niklas Nienaaß, Peter Pollák, Marcos Ros Sempere, Monica Semedo, Andrey Slabakov, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Maria Walsh, Salima Yenbou, Theodoros Zagorakis, Milan Zver
Substitutes present for the final vote	Catherine Griset, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

28	+
ECR	Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Dace Melbārde, Andrey Slabakov
NI	Andrea Bocskor
PPE	Asim Ademov, Tomasz Frankowski, Peter Pollák, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Maria Walsh, Theodoros Zagorakis, Milan Zver
Renew	Ilana Cicurel, Laurence Farreng, Irena Joveva, Monica Semedo
S&D	Sylvie Guillaume, Hannes Heide, Petra Kammerevert, Predrag Fred Matić, Victor Negrescu, Marcos Ros Sempere, Massimiliano Smeriglio
The Left	Alexis Georgoulis, Niyazi Kizilyürek
Verts/ALE	Niklas Nienä, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, Salima Yenbou

1	-
ID	Catherine Griset

1	0
ID	Gianantonio Da Re

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention