



2023/2129(DEC)

25.1.2024

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

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 2022, section III - Commission (2023/2129(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Antoni Comín i Oliveres

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Is alarmed about the rising number of crises worldwide, the highest-ever humanitarian funding gap and increasing inequalities between and within countries exacerbated by Russia's unjustified and unprovoked aggression in Ukraine which worsened the global food crisis, triggered an energy, cost of living and debt crisis worldwide and created economic uncertainty; is also concerned about the growing political and economic influence of China in Africa and Russian interference on that continent; is worried that Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe (NDICI-GE) is stretched to its limits and is not sufficient to address existing needs; calls on the Member States to ensure that the cushion is mobilised only for purposes within its intended scope;
2. Welcomes the Global Gateway strategy as a concerted EU response to global challenges; notes that 2022 was the first full year of the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy; underlines that actions bringing together public and private investment must be focused on areas where they can add value to the local economy and be consistent with development objectives and national strategies of partner countries, as well as with the Agenda 2030, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement; calls for more transparency, accountability and regular assessments of the Global Gateway implementation as well as for Parliament's involvement, beyond a simple observer role, in strategic choices involving Union funds in respect of the scrutiny role of the European Parliament of the NDICI-GE, which is the main source of financing of the Global Gateway; calls on the Commission to ensure that projects branded under the Global Gateway strategy contribute to the development objectives laid down in the NDICI-GE Regulation; insists that Global Gateway should not only align with the EU priorities but also with the needs of partner countries and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs;
3. Underlines the need to speed up progress on achieving the NDICI-GE spending targets for human development, gender, biodiversity and climate objectives; is worried, in particular, about the Commission's capacity to ensure reaching the Instrument's climate target of 30% and the biodiversity target of 10% for 2026 and 2027; recalls that the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services will undermine progress in approximately 80 % of the SDGs targets and that climate change will increasingly put pressure on food production and access, especially in vulnerable regions, undermining nutrition and food security; calls for concrete actions outlining how the climate and biodiversity targets are going to be met; recalls the commitment set out to ensure a strong gender perspective and mainstreaming implementing the EU Gender Action Plan III;
4. Reminds the Commission's commitment to dedicate at least 10% of the EU's development portfolio to support access to quality education; welcomes the progress reached so far and calls on the Commission to continue the implementation of this commitment; further calls on the Commission to involve local actors with relevant

experiences in providing quality education into the implementation of the EU financing for education in developing countries;

5. Is concerned about the depletion of the cushion within the NDICI-GE; insists that the Commission always notifies Parliament before the cushion is mobilised, respecting Parliament's right of scrutiny and that the Commission fully takes into consideration Parliament's observations on the nature, objectives and financial amounts envisaged; stresses that the Parliament is responsible for democratic oversight and scrutiny of the NDICI-GE instrument as a co-legislator under the co-decision procedure; urges the Commission in its future actions to preserve the initial purpose of cushion funds, which is to respond to unforeseen crises; notes that in 2022 EUR 501 million were mobilised from the cushion of the NDICI-GE instrument as part of the bilateral assistance for Ukraine; welcomes, in this regard, the proposal to create a new instrument, the Ukraine Facility, to provide predictable financial support for Ukraine over the 2024-2027 period;
6. Stresses the role of local NGOs and partners in service delivery and support to local communities; underlines the importance of enhancing their capacity to manage and implement actions financed by the EU and invites the Commission to facilitate adequate training towards this aim; is concerned about the continued difficulties faced by small local organisations to access Union funding; encourages the Commission to improve these funding procedures and to systematically prioritise local organisations in order to provide better capacity-building on the ground; highlights the efficacy of local ownership in project implementation in terms of prioritisation, allocation of resources and building local know-how;
7. Stresses the important role of the official development assistance (ODA); notes that the European Union and its 27 EU Member States together remain the world's biggest provider of external assistance, accounting for approximately 43% of the total ODA provided by all OECD ODA donors to developing countries in 2021; recalls the obligation under the NDICI-GE Regulation for 93% of the Instrument funding to be compliant with the ODA criteria; stresses that blending and public-private partnerships alone cannot guarantee universal access to, or replace public investments in fields such as education, social protection or health care, that provide crucial long-term prospects for the graduation from poverty and, therefore, advocates for a cautious approach in using them;
8. Calls for ex ante assessments to determine the possible implications and risks of EU programs with regard to human rights, especially in projects dealing with tourism and biodiversity protection, as well as in refugee and diaspora-focused programs;
9. Asks the Commission to guarantee that EU funding programs are not linked to cases of transnational repression, affecting refugees, asylum seekers, and naturalized citizens in the EU;
10. Calls on the Commission and Member States for a suspension or modulation of EU funding programs that (in)directly contribute to human rights violations, with particular regard to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), including their right to self-determination, land, free assembly, and free, prior and informed consent;

11. Highlights the fact that the legitimacy and effectiveness of EU development cooperation hinges on the correct implementation of activities and their proper funding; recognises the work of the Commission in applying controls to make sure that transactions are made in a legitimate manner and that activities are implemented in accordance with the priorities set by the legislator; calls on the Commission to further improve controls in order to decrease the amount of transactional errors, to act upon ECA recommendations that have not been implemented and to redouble efforts to find eligible projects and to ensure a sufficient amount of payments under the current expenditure ceiling; welcomes the finding of the ECA report on the EU budget for 2022 that DG ECHO implemented ECA recommendation and established a procedure ensuring that partner organisations base their allocation of shared costs on expenditure actually incurred;
12. Welcomes the European Court of Auditors (ECA) Special Report 14/2023 entitled ‘Programming the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe: Comprehensive programmes with deficiencies in the methods for allocating funds and impact monitoring’; expects the Commission to act on the recommendations made by the ECA especially as regards more predictable and transparent programming as well as clearer methodology for assessing the impact of EU’s support and reiterates in this regard the recommendations made in its resolution of 12 December 2023 on the implementation of the NDICI-GE; encourages the ECA to prepare special reports relating to development cooperation expenditure and to regularly cover development cooperation aspects in its special reports on horizontal issues in accordance with the Policy Coherence for Development principle set in article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR FOR THE OPINION HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur declares under his exclusive responsibility that he did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	24.1.2024
Result of final vote	+: 18 -: 2 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Alessandra Basso, Hildegard Bentele, Stéphane Bijoux, Dominique Bilde, Mercedes Bresso, Catherine Chabaud, Christophe Clergeau, Antoni Comín i Oliveres, Mónica Silvana González, Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Beata Kempa, Karsten Lucke, Erik Marquardt, Janina Ochojska, Eleni Stavrou, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Bernhard Zimniok
Substitutes present for the final vote	Carlos Zorrinho
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Riho Terras

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

18	+
ECR	Beata Kempa
NI	Antoni Comín i Oliveres
PPE	Hildegard Bentele, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Janina Ochojska, Eleni Stavrou, Riho Terras
Renew	Stéphane Bijoux, Catherine Chabaud
S&D	Mercedes Bresso, Christophe Clergeau, Mónica Silvana González, Karsten Lucke, Carlos Zorrinho
The Left	Miguel Urbán Crespo
Vers/ALE	Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, Erik Marquardt

2	-
ID	Dominique Bilde, Bernhard Zimniok

1	0
ID	Alessandra Basso

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention