



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Regional Development

2009/2002(BUD)

3.9.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010,
Section III - Commission
(C7-0300/2009 - 2009/2002(BUD))

Rapporteur: Danuta Maria Hübner

PA_NonLeg

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

As the committee has consistently pointed out, in making its budgetary provisions the European Commission assesses budgetary needs taking into account the decisions of the European Council, the IIA, the amounts due under projects closing down under previous programming periods, current payment obligations and the likely calls for advance payments for the current period. Thus overall payments increase by 4.1% comprising on the one hand interim payments and outstanding commitments for the 2000-6 programming period. Interim payments account for the vast majority of payments in 2010 as the operational programmes get into stride and the simplification of procedures introduced by the legislative modifications begins to take effect.

The Commission tells us that the Cohesion policy 2010 budget is designed to accelerate implementation to aid full recovery from the economic crisis. Increased use of financial instruments such as JASPERS to facilitate launching of major projects and necessary reprogramming to support investments in energy efficiency, low-carbon and renewable energy technologies and measure to combat climate change are therefore envisaged. Furthermore in line with the accelerator principle, payment appropriations amount to 30.928.2 million EUR (including the Cohesion Fund) entirely dedicated to interim payments.

In 2009, at the initiative of the Committee on Regional Policy, Parliament requested the setting-up of three pilot projects covering the integration of the ROMA communities, the promotion of EU regional policy on a global scale, and an ERASMUS programme for elected local and regional representatives. At this early stage of the parliamentary term, and in the interest of ensuring sound financial management, your rapporteur considers that before proposing any new pilot projects, the committee be informed in as much detail as possible, of the actions taken to implement the projects financed under the 2009 budget.

Lastly, at a time when European Economic recovery is still at an embryonic stage and is highly dependent on large scale government spending and despite the mechanistic manner in which Cohesion policy allocations are managed, it appears somewhat paradoxical that ERDF commitments for the Regional competitiveness and employment objective are reduced by 372.536.823 EUR compared with 2009. It is therefore legitimate to ask if this reduction is consistent with the need to stimulate the economy and create jobs in the advanced economies of Europe in order to maintain and increase competitiveness at the global level.

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Takes the view that the amounts for regional policy entered in the preliminary draft budget correspond to the needs of the Union in its efforts to reduce regional disparities and meet the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives; therefore calls for all PDB budget lines to be maintained or, where necessary, restored;
2. Encourages the Commission in its efforts to promote the use of non-grant innovative forms of finance and financial engineering instruments to enhance access to finance for the 2007-13 programmes and in particular those instruments facilitating access to risk capital and micro-credits for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); in this context, asks the Commission to inform Parliament of the functioning of the preparatory action it has run since 2008 and financed under budget line 13.03.24 as well as information concerning the follow-up to this action in the future;
3. Together with the Commission and the Council, shares the belief that the legislative changes made in the context of the European Economic Recovery plan will contribute to making the structural funds a valuable instrument for the recovery of the European economy in 2010; in this context, calls on Member States to ensure that optimal use is made of the new facilities and simplified procedures so as to accelerate implementation, making every effort to ensure the execution on time of the allocations for the national operational programmes and the corresponding projects, as well as maximising their multiplier effect in stimulating economic activity, which is of vital importance in regions heavily dependent on public investment, such as the most remote regions; furthermore, requires Member States to make sure that simplification of procedures is accompanied by efficient management and control systems aimed at optimising the capacity for implementing the Funds while preventing their abusive use;
4. Notes that the Erasmus pilot project was allocated EUR 2 million in 2009, that the full amount was paid out in 2009 and that no credits or payments are foreseen in 2010; asks the Commission to inform Parliament of the actions undertaken in the context of the three pilot projects implemented at Parliament's request;
5. Notes that the 2010 commitment appropriations for the regional competitiveness and employment objective are reduced by EUR 372 536 823 compared to 2009 and asks if this reduction is consistent with the need to stimulate the economy and create jobs in the advanced economies of Europe in order to maintain and increase competitiveness at the global level.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	2.9.2009
Result of final vote	+: 37 -: 2 0: 5
Members present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Luís Paulo Alves, Raffaele Baldassarre, Catherine Bearder, Victor Boştinaru, Sophie Briard Auconie, Zuzana Brzobohatá, John Bufton, Alain Cadec, Salvatore Caronna, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Francesco De Angelis, Tamás Deutsch, Elie Hoarau, Danuta Maria Hübner, Ian Hudghton, Seán Kelly, Evgeni Kirilov, Constanze Angela Krehl, Petru Constantin Luhan, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Miroslav Mikolášik, Franz Obermayr, Jan Olbrycht, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Athanasios Pafilis, Markus Pieper, Monika Smolková, Georgios Stavrakakis, Csanád Szegedi, Nuno Teixeira, Michael Theurer, Oldřich Vlasák, Kerstin Westphal, Joachim Zeller
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jan Březina, Ivars Godmanis, Catherine Greze, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Richard Seeber, Hermann Winkler
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Jean-Paul Besset