



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2020)0302

General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021 - all sections

European Parliament resolution of 12 November 2020 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021 (11072/1/2020 – C9-0314/2020 – 2020/1998(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,
- having regard to Council Decision 2014/335/EU, Euratom of 26 May 2014 on the system of own resources of the European Union¹,
- 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 966/2012²,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020³,
- having regard to Commission Amended proposal of 28 May 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (COM(2020)0443);
- having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management⁴,
- having regard to its interim report of 14 November 2018 on the multiannual financial

¹ OJ L 168, 7.6.2014, p. 105.

² OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

³ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁴ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

framework 2021-2027 – Parliament’s position with a view to an agreement¹ and to its resolution of 23 July 2020 on the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council meeting of 17-21 July 2020;

- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2021 budget Section III - Commission²,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 May 2020 on Parliament’s estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2021³,
- having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021, which the Commission adopted on 27 July 2020 (COM(2020)0300) (the “DB”),
- having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021, which the Council adopted on 28 September 2020 and forwarded to Parliament on 1 October 2020 (11072/1/2020 – C9-0314/2020),
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 16 September 2020 on the draft Council decision on the system of own resources of the European Union⁴,
- having regard to Rule 94 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the opinions of the committees concerned,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A9-0206/2020),

Section III

General overview

1. Recalls that 2021 should be the first year of the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF); regrets that because of the delays in the MFF/Own Resources (MFF/OR) negotiations, for which Parliament has been ready since November 2018 and which could not start before the European Council’s 21 July 2020 conclusions, as well as because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the budgetary procedure for 2021 could not build so far on a solid and ambitious MFF agreement;
2. Notes that the Commission presented a draft budget (DB) for 2021 based on its own MFF proposals which were updated in May 2020, while the Council limited its reading, with the exception of Heading 7, to an arithmetic translation of the European Council’s conclusions, awaiting the Amending letter which the Commission will use to update its proposal after a political agreement has been reached on the MFF/OR ;
3. Takes note of the Council’s position on the DB, including the importance it attaches to the Amending letter; concurs with the Council on the Amending letter, while wanting

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0449.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0166.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0123.

⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0220.

to present a reading which follows Parliament's priorities on the MFF/OR and the 2021 Budget in a coordinated manner; notes that this approach is also motivated by the limited time that will be left following the presentation of the Amending letter;

4. Recalls that in its abovementioned resolution of 19 June 2020 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2021 Budget, Parliament stressed that the primary focus of the 2021 Budget should be to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and support a recovery built on the European Green Deal and digital transformation, in order to promote fair, inclusive and sustainable growth, high-quality job creation and its long-term goal of socioeconomic convergence;
5. Welcomes the EU Recovery Plan; insists, however, on the need to clearly enshrine the role of the budgetary authority in authorising external assigned revenue, notably of the Next Generation EU (NGEU) recovery instrument, under the annual budgetary procedure;
6. Recalls its position that the 2021-2027 MFF climate and biodiversity mainstreaming targets must go beyond the levels of targeted spending shares set out in its interim report; aims, therefore, to achieve a biodiversity spending level of at least 10 % and a climate mainstreaming spending level of at least 30 % for 2021; reiterates its demand for a gender mainstreaming concept that draws together gender-specific information on objectives, inputs, outputs, results, including financing commitments for gender equality and the methodology for tracking and reporting gender equality expenditure;
7. Reiterates its call on the Commission to lay down clear eligibility criteria for a new stringent and comprehensive methodology for both climate and biodiversity related expenditure, in the form of Framework Regulations ensuring that only projects meeting the relevant technical screening criteria developed under Regulation (EU) 2020/852¹ shall be accounted for when contributing to those spending targets, together with the corresponding corrective measures, where relevant, and the full implementation of the principle of "do no significant harm" referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2020/852 to ensure that the Union fulfils its commitments under the Paris Agreement and its call for phase-out of indirect fossil fuel subsidies and a ban on direct ones in the entire Union budget;
8. Decides to increase to the levels set out in the MFF interim report of 14 November 2018 the fifteen flagship programmes identified in its resolution of 23 July 2020 on the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council meeting of 17-21 July 2020² (Horizon Europe, InvestEU, Erasmus+, the Child Guarantee, the Just Transition Fund, Digital Europe, the Connecting Europe Facility, LIFE, EU4health, the Integrated Border Management Fund, Creative Europe, the Right and Values programme, the European Defence Fund, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and humanitarian aid, as well as relevant EU agencies and the European Public Prosecutor's Office); decides further to base its reading on the MFF ceilings proposed by the Commission in the DB; considers that any increase for the flagship programmes should be accompanied by a corresponding rise in the ceiling of

¹ Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment, and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 (OJ L 198, 22.6.2020, p. 13).

² Text adopted, P9_TA(2020)0206.

the relevant MFF heading; decides to reinforce funding for Parliament's priorities *inter alia* in the fields of climate change, energy, digital and transport interconnectivity, space, SMEs, tourism, security, migration, fundamental rights and external action;

9. Accepts the Council's increases in Headings 1, 2a and 3, with the exception of the lines where it decides on a higher amount of appropriations; accepts further the moving of the Resilience cluster from Heading 5 to Heading 2b;
10. Reaffirms its previous commitments to make full use of the possibility to re-use de-commitments for research laid down in Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation;
11. Insists on the need of a more detailed budgetary nomenclature allowing the budgetary authority to fully exercise its decision-making role in the annual budgetary procedure and scrutiny over the implementation of the budget in Headings 2b, 4 and 6;
12. As a general rule, decides to restore DB levels on all lines cut by the Council and not reinforced in its reading, with the exception of Heading 7;
13. Points to the importance of ensuring that sufficient financial resources and adequate human resources capacities are allocated to Union agencies enabling them to fulfil their mandate, execute their tasks and respond optimally to the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak; underlines the fact that proper coordination and synergies between agencies are needed to increase the effectiveness of their work, especially where there is convergence towards specific policy objectives, in order to allow for the fair and efficient use of public money; insists that the Commission ensure optimal allocation of personnel among its Directorates-General reflecting urgent needs and long-term priorities related to the response to the COVID-19 crisis and the European Green Deal in particular;
14. Notes that the updated pragmatic calendar of the budgetary procedure does not allow for a timely agreement on a possible second DB proposal; deems it crucial, therefore, to fully exploit the whole period of the budgetary conciliation in order to achieve an ambitious agreement;
15. Sets the overall level of appropriations for the 2021 Budget (all sections) at EUR 181 762 377 716 in commitment appropriations, representing an increase of EUR 15 016 195 740 compared to the DB; decides in addition to make available an amount of EUR 1 631 420 001 in commitment appropriations further to de-commitments under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation; recalls however that that level should be adjusted after the publication of the Amending letter and as the negotiations and conciliation advance;
16. Recalls that, as expressed in its abovementioned legislative resolution of 16 September 2020, in order to finance 2021 Budget, the new categories of own resources should be introduced as of 2021 and that any amounts generated by new own resources beyond the level necessary to cover the repayment obligations of the NGEU in a given year should remain in the Union budget as general revenue notably to top-up the 15 EU flagship programmes as of 2021 accompanied by the corresponding rise of the MFF ceilings;

Heading 1

17. Highlights that Horizon Europe provides very strong European added value and stresses the importance of the programme for significant areas of European research essential to making the European Green Deal a success, and contributing to the transition towards a climate-neutral economy and society by 2050, and in supporting the digital transformation, which is vital for the Union's future prosperity; stresses also that the COVID-19 outbreak has demonstrated the need to invest in health research; proposes therefore to significantly increase Horizon Europe, in line with its long-held position calling for an overall budget of EUR 120 billion over the 2021-2027 MFF period; considers, furthermore, that the full amount of decommitments made over the whole of the current MFF should be made available, in accordance with Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation, to support the climate and digital transitions and health research;
18. Is convinced that the fight against cancer should be a priority for the Union, and that efforts need to be significantly stepped up in that regard; underlines the fact that cancer research is an important pillar in that fight; stresses that research intensifies in this field without any delay;
19. Calls for the 2021 Union budget to ensure that the InvestEU Programme is sufficiently funded and delivers on both its long-term objectives and participates in the rebuilding of European long-term competitiveness by providing more investment capacity aimed at supporting sustainable infrastructure, research, innovation, digitalisation, SMEs, and social investments and its new short term objective of supporting a sustainable economic recovery via strategic sustainable investments; notes with deep regret that the European Council has rejected the Commission proposal on a Solvency Support Instrument (SSI); supports the line envisaged in Parliament's preparatory works on the SSI to transfer the appropriations foreseen for the SSI to the InvestEU Programme to the benefit of companies established in Member States and operating in the Union;
20. Stresses the crucial role of the Connecting Europe Facility in fostering the development of a high-performance trans-European network and interconnectivity across Member States in particular those Member States that support a sustainable and cross-border mobility as well as modal shift, with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60 % by 2030, supporting energy and transport projects in the shift towards a climate-neutral economy with security of supply taking into consideration the special situation of European insular and peripheral regions, and stressing the need for a digital transition, including the up-skilling and re-skilling of workers in the Union; proposes therefore major increases;
21. Underlines that the COVID-19 crisis has showed the increasing importance of digitalisation for the daily functioning of the economy; recognises the importance of the Digital Europe Programme in shaping and supporting the digital transition; proposes increases that go beyond its interim position on the MFF, to take account of needs revealed by the pandemic;
22. Recalls the fundamental value of the European Space programme, in particular the contribution of Copernicus and Galileo to the European Green Deal and consequently requests targeted reinforcements to ensure the programmes can support the Union's environmental goals; stresses the importance of independence of the European space industry in the global competition and highlights the added-value of these programmes for job growth, competitiveness, and the development of SMEs;

23. Considers that it is also necessary to strengthen further important priorities in the heading; calls, *inter alia*, for a substantial increase in the amount dedicated to SME objectives which are a cornerstone of the Union economy and play a crucial role in delivering excellent quality investment and job creation in all Member States, also with the aim of supporting and increasing the participation of women in SMEs and their access to markets; furthermore, strengthens key programmes of the Space Cluster; recalls the important role that Union agencies play in helping to achieve Union policy objectives; calls therefore for sufficient funding and staffing for the EU-Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), the European Union Agency for Railway (ERA), the European Banking Authority (EBA), the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), the European Union for the Space Programme and the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) in line with their tasks and responsibilities;
24. Reiterates its demand for support to SMEs, in particular in the tourism sector, the creative industry and the transport sector so as to build up their capacity to recover from the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak; moreover, reiterates Parliament's request, stemming from the 2018 interim report on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027¹, for the creation of a new specific budget line in order to take into consideration the tourism sector, which is of paramount importance for the whole Union economy, competitiveness, employment (it ensures 23 million direct and indirect jobs in the Union, especially for young people) and social development, has been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 crisis and is experiencing a rapid and sharp drop in demand and a surge in job losses, putting many European SMEs at risk;
25. Regrets that the Commission did not propose the creation of a dedicated line for tourism due to the current situation; calls for quick direct and indirect support for that sector, in particular for SMEs;
26. Increases therefore the level of commitment appropriations for Heading 1 by EUR 6 313 980 774 above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), of which EUR 5 996 664 225 for flagship programmes; in addition, makes available to the heading an amount of EUR 1 631 420 001 in commitment appropriations further to de-commitments under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation;

Heading 2a

27. Decides to take over the Council's reading of Heading 2a;

Heading 2b

28. Emphasises the urgent need to allocate additional resources to the EU4Health Programme, contributing in particular to address the significant structural needs identified during the COVID-19 crisis, setting out key action areas such as the improvement of national health systems and reduction of health inequalities, ensuring the availability and affordability of medicines and other crisis-relevant products, to ensure continued and timely provision of accessible and safe sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services and to strengthen *inter alia* the Union fight against

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0449.

cancer;

29. Emphasises the importance of Erasmus+ as a key flagship programme and one of the most successful Union programmes with strategic investment in the future of the Union and of its citizens; recalls that insufficient funding for the Erasmus+ programme would endanger the continued creation of new opportunities for and the increased employability of young people, as well as the capacity of the programme to reach its new objectives and to uphold the challenges of becoming more inclusive and ecological; decides therefore to substantially increase the funding for Erasmus+ in line with its position to triple its budget;
30. Recalls that the cultural and creative sector is one of the most hit by the COVID-19 outbreak and calls for adequate answers and financing to reduce continuing substantive losses of the sector due to the unforeseeable closure of venues during the COVID-19 crisis; proposes therefore to substantially increase the respective budget lines of Creative Europe to support the sectors affected by the crisis;
31. Insists on the need for more transparency in the allocation of funds under the various programme components and sub-programmes of Erasmus+, by restoring its previous nomenclature, and of Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme by creating a new budget line for the Union values strand; reiterates its request to the Commission to increase transparency in its use of the budget assigned to multimedia activities, in particular by creating a series of new budget lines in connection with the measures;
32. Decides to create new budget line 07 06 04 “Protect and promote Union values” in order to reinforce the funding focus on protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights including supporting activities by civil society organisations in this area;
33. Echoes the Commission prediction that, in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak, fighting against extreme poverty, and especially tackling child poverty will become even more important in the coming years; consequently, insists that a separate budget line under ESF+ needs to be created for the European Child Guarantee with an allocation of EUR 1 billion for the year 2021; recalls the importance of a sufficient Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), especially in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak;
34. Recalls that the COVID-19 crisis affects women, groups of people who are subject to systematic gender-based discrimination and other vulnerable groups disproportionately and calls for the reinforcement of the Employment and Social Innovation strand to support programmes and trainings targeted at advancing their participation and tackling their precarity on the labour market;
35. Stresses the crucial role of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme to protect and promote the rights and values enshrined in the Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and insists that additional appropriations are required for each stand and notably for the Daphne strand to fight violence against women and for the strand promoting citizens engagement and participation in the life of the Union;
36. Emphasises the importance of the Justice Programme in contributing to the further development of a European area of justice based on rule of law, mutual recognition and

mutual trust and decides to reinforces that programme;

37. Calls for an increase in appropriations in the Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society Cluster to better integrate a gender perspective in each of the programmes, as well as to support and promote gender studies and research in the Union;
38. Deems it necessary to increase appropriations for the Turkish Cypriot Community budget line for the purpose of contributing decisively to the continuation and intensification of the mission of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and supporting the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, thereby promoting trust and reconciliation between the two communities;
39. Deeply regrets that the Commission still has not responded to Parliament's call for a comprehensive review of the budget line for multimedia measures, particularly with regard to the framework contract with Euronews; decides to put its budgetary allocation in reserve until the Commission has answered the concerns raised by the Court of Auditors; notes however that the Court of Auditors does not point to any shortcomings on Euronews' part in its contractual reporting duties under the current framework;
40. Recalls the important role played by the decentralised agencies active under this heading; demands to provide the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) with sufficient financial and human resources to perform its tasks, considering the additional projects which have been identified through the agency's consultation process with stakeholders; asks to provide the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Labour Authority (ELA) with adequate budgetary resources, taking into account the relevance of their mission, as well as the expected role of ELA in ensuring fair labour mobility in the context of the COVID-19 crisis; calls in addition for sufficient funding and staffing, for further important priorities, to be allocated to the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA);
41. Decides to apply targeted reinforcements to the European Public Prosecutors Office (EPPO) to allow the body to take up its duties without delay and in line with the requirements to fulfil its mandate; believes that its nature requires a stronger guarantee of independence, and its budget should therefore be presented under Heading 7, as an independent entity organism rather than assimilated to an agency; underlines that the establishment of the EPPO must not result in a deterioration of capacity of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) to function properly;
42. Rejects the Commission proposal to merge different budget lines linked to social policy objectives; believes that separate budget lines as was the case in the past would guarantee the necessary transparency and resources for each of those key areas;
43. Decides to transfer the budget line 06 04 01 (EU Recovery Instrument - Payment of periodic coupon and redemption at maturity) to Chapter 17, as all financing costs of NGEU-related spending should be counted over and over the MFF ceilings;
44. Reinforces Heading 2b overall by EUR +5 894 270 074 above the DB in commitment appropriations (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), EUR 6 041 509 293 of which is for flagship programmes;

Heading 3

45. Reminds that the European Council, in its position on the European Recovery Instrument, did not retain the level of support for the Just Transition Fund as foreseen by the Commission proposal; expresses its concerns that these cuts will seriously undermine the recovery efforts; re-iterates that the Just Transition Fund is a vital and indispensable building block in the architecture of the European Green Deal; proposes therefore an increase of EUR 500 million in commitment appropriations for that flagship programme in 2021;
46. In line with the overall priority to tackle climate change and prevent biodiversity loss, focuses substantial increases worth EUR 237 million in commitment appropriations on budget lines pertaining to LIFE programme; notes that that increase is intended to contribute to the main objectives such as preservation of nature and biodiversity, the circular economy and quality of life, climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as the clean energy transition; expects the Commission to warrant the necessary absorption capacity for an effective use of these additional means;
47. Reminds that a number of agricultural sectors have been hard hit by the COVID-19 outbreak and therefore supports targeted reinforcements on budget lines for market support measures under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) which aim at mitigating the effects of the crisis caused by that outbreak, notably for organic farms and small-scale farmers; expects the Amending letter to adjust further the level of appropriations of EAGF by taking into account the assigned revenue expected to be available in 2021 and other parameters such as the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on agricultural sectors;
48. Considers that any appropriations, especially from the Common Agricultural Policy, shall not be used for supporting breeding or rearing of bulls used for lethal bull fighting activities.
49. Highlights the particularly difficult socio-economic circumstances in the Union's outermost regions, compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis; against that background, proposes a top-up for the budget line covering the POSEI programme for the maintenance of the agricultural activity and for the supply of food and agricultural products in the outermost regions, which must be provided with adequate resources; furthermore, underlines the importance of taking into account the special characteristics and constraints of the outermost regions when designing Union programmes and funds in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021- 2027 and in the NGEU.
50. Reinforces the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund by EUR 19,6 million; recognises that 2021 will be a key year for the fisheries sector, which will have to face simultaneously the challenges of the adaptation to European Green Deal objectives, the risks associated with the COVID 19-crisis and Brexit;
51. Stresses the importance of ensuring sufficient financial resources for the collection, management, use and exchange of data in the fisheries sector;
52. Intends to support the European Environment Agency (EEA) with additional financial and human resources, considering that the agency is expected to play a fundamental role in supporting Green Deal related actions, by monitoring and reporting on the Union

biodiversity strategy, circular economy, climate change adaptation and zero pollution initiatives.

53. Overall, reinforces Heading 3 by EUR 867 937 490 above DB in commitment appropriations (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), EUR 739 100 000 of which is for flagship programmes;

Heading 4

54. Increases funding for Parliament's priorities in the fields of migration and border management, most prominently the Integrated Border Management Fund and the Asylum and Migration Fund; at the same time, aims to enhance budgetary transparency by reflecting both Funds' specific objectives into the budget structure, so that the budgetary authority can track expenditure more closely;
55. Underlines that it is of paramount importance to invest in adequate funding and staffing levels for all agencies operating in the fields of migration, asylum and border management; requests additional staff resources for the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), which will be necessary for the agency to properly implement its field operations, training development, analytical activities and governance framework, as well as for the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT-Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-Lisa); requests additional financial and staff resources for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex);
56. Is deeply concerned by the continuing loss of lives in the Mediterranean; is of the opinion that a more long-term approach to search and rescue (SAR) operations is necessary as SAR cannot be exclusively left to non-state actors; considers that the Commission should present a legislative proposal to set up a Search and Rescue Fund to support SAR missions in the Mediterranean; proposes, therefore, the creation of a new budget line for that fund to encourage the saving of lives and to show solidarity among Member States in the carrying out of SAR operations in accordance with international law and fundamental rights, including the right to life and the principle of non-refoulement;
57. In sum, reinforces Heading 4 by EUR 710 251 000 in commitment appropriations above DB levels, EUR 500 251 000 of which is for flagship programmes;

Heading 5

58. Stresses the importance of a progressive framing of the Union's common security and defence policy; underlines the importance of enhancing European cooperation in defence matters since it not only makes Europe and its citizens safer, but also leads to a cost reduction; calls for increased funding for the European Defence Fund in order to fully foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base that will contribute to the much-needed strategic autonomy of the Union;
59. Calls for increased funding for military mobility with the aim of helping Member States act faster and more effectively; notes that sufficient funding is needed to support missions and operations under the common security and defence policy, including by

measures such as funding dual-use transport infrastructure and simplifying diplomatic clearances and customs rules;

60. Recalls that the important role played by decentralised agencies operating in the field of security and law enforcement, in particular with regard to European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), to ensure its important activity in the areas of fight against terrorism and organised crime, and proposes targeted increases to allow them to properly perform their tasks;
61. Reinforces Heading 5 overall by EUR 372 320 760 above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), EUR 312 829 132 of which is for flagship programmes;

Heading 6

62. Emphasises that at a time when external challenges and matters of international relations are gaining importance and are dominating international politics, the external dimension of the Union budget must be appropriately funded and prepared to respond without delay to current, emerging, as well as future challenges; notes that the bulk of external action spending is concentrated in NDICI, on which inter-institutional legislative negotiations are still ongoing;
63. Regrets that the new nomenclature for external action as proposed by the Commission is much less detailed than the previous one, reducing transparency, predictability, accountability, scrutiny, and limiting the budgetary authority's capacity to make choices reflecting political priorities; insists, therefore, that a more differentiated budget structure, with dedicated lines for the most important beneficiaries, policy areas and sub-regions, is needed, in order to enhance the clarity and readability of the budget; proposes therefore a revised nomenclature for NDICI, adapted to the new instruments, while introducing a higher level of detail;
64. Calls for increased funding levels for all geographic and thematic programmes under the NDICI, in line with its first-reading position on the latter; reiterates its position that the thematic programmes within the NDICI should be reinforced in order to allow the Union to maintain its strong role in these priority areas; underlines that its position on the allocations for the NDICI is fully aligned with the amounts laid down in Parliament's first-reading position on the NDICI;
65. Proposes the creation of a dedicated budget line for "the support to the political process in Libya" with the objective of contributing to a peaceful resolution to the Libyan conflict;
66. Points to the persistent challenges in the Union's Eastern and Southern neighbourhood, the dedicated budget for which should therefore be reinforced, as well as the importance of endowing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with increased financial support to fulfil its mandate, in view of the growing needs of Palestinian refugees and as an investment towards stability and development in the region; recalls the importance of developing stable relations and strong cooperation between the Union and Africa and considers it appropriate that sufficient financial

resources be dedicated to the development of that continent, which would contribute inter alia to mitigating the root causes of forced migration;

67. Emphasises the urgent need to step up development cooperation on health, remote and inclusive high-quality learning programmes, and climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as on biodiversity, nutrition, sustainable agriculture and food security, as the COVID-19 crisis worsens the upward trend in global hunger; points out that in that regard support to institution building and strengthening and education to enlarge the skilled labour force are of great importance; affirms that a much higher sum is essential for the people, planet, prosperity and partnership lines than the figure set out for the Global Challenges line in the DB;
68. Underlines the need for meaningful financing of the Western Balkans with a view to the accession process as well as numerous challenges that the Union and the candidate countries need to face; deems it essential that the new nomenclature for the IPA III instrument comprises separate budget lines for the Western Balkans and Turkey, in view of the highly sensitive nature of Union funding for Turkey;
69. Denounces Turkey's continuous violations of international and Union law, and Union principles and values; demands that the funding for political reforms in Turkey be exclusively dedicated to fostering dialogue and providing support to civil society, non-state actors and people-to-people contacts, as long as the country does not make any progress with regard to democracy, rule of law and human rights; strongly condemns Turkey's repeated provocations and violations of Greek and Cypriot sovereignty;
70. Insists, even more so in the current COVID-19 climate and following the unfortunate decision of the European Council to discard the external pillar of NGEU, on the need to increase the humanitarian aid chapter and the need for safeguards against the crowding out of internal or external use of the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve; underlines the need to ensure the continuing financing of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, in the event of a possible impasse in the ongoing negotiations on the European Solidarity Corps programme;
71. Following the recent worrying developments in Belarus, calls for Union support through the European External Action Service and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), as well as through the creation of a new Special Representative for Belarus, to support the process for a peaceful transition of power in accordance with a UN- or alternatively an OSCE-led dialogue based on the protection of human rights and the will of the Belarusian people;
72. In light of threats related to cybersecurity as well as the spreading of fake news, highlights the need for the Union budget to better address and respond to them on a horizontal level, both at the headquarters and at Union delegations around the world; deems it necessary therefore to reinforce lines dedicated to strategic communication for external action;
73. Reinforces Heading 5 overall by EUR 698 781 256 above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), EUR 583 041 792 of which is for flagship programmes;

Heading 7

74. Decides not to restore, at this stage, the Council's cuts in Heading 7;
75. Deeply regrets that the Commission still has not responded to Parliament's call for full access to contracts and information regarding the COVID-19 vaccines-related contract covered by Draft amending budget No 8/2020; demands that the Commission grant the budgetary authority access to the COVID-19 vaccines-related contract before the end of 2020;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

76. 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; having carried out a careful analysis of all the proposals submitted adopts a balanced package of PP-PAs that reflects Parliament's political priorities; calls on the Commission to swiftly implement PP-PAs, in close cooperation with Members, and provide feedback on their performance and results delivered on the ground;

Payments

77. Underlines the necessity to provide a sufficient level of payment appropriations in the 2021 Budget that will take into account the volume of outstanding commitments at the end of 2020 in order to avoid the accumulation of unpaid claims from MFF 2014-2020 and to finance the frontloading of expenditure related to the COVID-19 crisis; notes that, due to delays in the implementation of the 2014-2020 programming period, most of the relevant payments will be settled in 2021 and 2022; underlines the increased accuracy of the Member State forecasts which need to be fully taken into account in the 2021 Budget; stresses therefore that a credible payments plan for the whole MFF 2021-2027 is needed, providing for sufficient payments in its first years with a possibility to carry unused payments forward to the next years with the help of special instruments over and above the MFF payments ceilings;
78. Recalls that several legislative measures have been adopted in the course of 2020 aimed at facilitating absorption, cutting red tape and accelerating the actual disbursement of funds under several programmes in order to provide cash-flow and liquidity in a context of severe economic depression; judges that this approach would be severely and unjustifiably compromised if not underpinned by a sufficient level of payment appropriations in 2021; calls therefore for adequate means to be made available as of the adoption of the 2021 Budget; commits to take any steps necessary to adjusting of payment appropriations in the course of execution throughout 2021;
79. Reiterates Parliament's position of 4 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of the Union's budget in the case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in Member States¹; underlines the importance of having a mechanism in place to protect the Union budget where there is a systemic threat to values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union,

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0349.

and where the financial interests of the Union are at stake; stresses that Parliament will not accept an agreement on a mechanism which does not protect the Union budget against general deficiencies in the rule of law;

Other Sections

Section I – European Parliament

80. Expresses its surprise and deep concern at the Commission's proposed cuts to Parliament's budget, which break once more the tradition of good cooperation between the two institutions; restores the appropriations established in the estimates on the basis of a careful and responsible analysis of the needs of Parliament for 2021 and adopted by plenary in its abovementioned resolution on 14 May 2020 with a large majority. and adjusts those to take into account the setting-up of five new parliamentary committees when restoring the appropriations; highlights that, in the course of 2021, the 2021 Budget might need to be adjusted in order to take account of the evolution of the COVID-19 crisis;
81. Notes the ongoing negotiations on the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the uncertainty regarding the funding level of the new Heading 7 - European Public Administration; stresses that Parliament has fulfilled the 5 % staff reduction objective and actually saw an overall cut of 6 %; highlights the fact that, since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament has had to cope with an increased amount of tasks; notes that synergies and re-prioritisation were achieved in the last legislative term; stresses that the functioning of Parliament depends on the fulfilment of its political, legislative and administrative tasks, which require adequate staffing levels; is deeply concerned by the serious and structural understaffing in many committees' secretariats in contradiction with the important increase of their workload and invites the Bureau and the Secretary-General to urgently provide solutions to adequately staff the committees' secretariats;
82. Reiterates Parliament's priorities for the forthcoming financial year, namely, focusing Parliament's budget on its core functions of legislating, acting as one arm of the budgetary authority, representing citizens and scrutinising 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, building security, cyber-security and IT development, and multiannual building projects;
83. In line with the estimates adopted by Parliament:
 - (a) welcomes the measures taken by Parliament regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, including new temporary working methods and the provision of a COVID-19 screening test centre for Members and staff; reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to evaluate the financial consequences of those measures on Parliament's budgets for 2020 and 2021 and present it to Parliament's Committee on Budgets in November 2020; calls on the Secretary-General to elaborate detailed guidelines to better prepare for any future *force majeure* events in order to ensure the continued fulfilment of Parliament's legislative

functions if orderly functioning cannot be upheld;

- (b) reiterates its call on the Bureau for a detailed roadmap on achieving the ambitious environmental targets and reducing its carbon footprint as set in the Bureau decision of 16 December 2019 and for an annual review of results to be presented to Parliament's Committee on Budgets;
- (c) recalls its request to align the accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs) mission allowances for the missions they carry out between the three places of work of Parliament to the level of allowance for civil servants and other agents; calls again for the revision of the Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the Union to consider the possibility for APAs, subject to certain conditions, to accompany Members on official Parliament delegations and missions;
- (d) reiterates its request to the Bureau to establish full flexibility of presence for Members during green weeks;
- (e) underlines the need for Parliament's Committee on Budgets to receive all relevant information relating to Parliament's budget in a timely and intelligible manner to be able to take informed decisions; strongly reiterates its requests for:
 - a detailed analysis and justification of the costs and savings relating to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union and that the exact figures be communicated to Parliament's Committee on Budgets in November 2020;
 - a detailed breakdown of expenditure for the establishment of the new Europa Experience centres for 2021 while taking into consideration the potential consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak on local market prospects and the roll out of Europa experiences spaces;
 - a detailed breakdown of expenditure for the new visitor strategy and the four-year information campaign, as well as a thorough evaluation of the communication campaign undertaken before and during the 2019 European elections; is of the opinion that any new communication measures should be based on an objective and factual analysis of that evaluation;
 - a detailed and thorough analysis of the representation costs of diplomatic presence beyond the borders of the Union in Indonesia (Jakarta), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) and the United States (New York);
 - further details regarding the expenditure for the project management of the construction of the west wing of the Konrad Adenauer building;
 - an overview of all other currently rented Parliament buildings in the three places that will remain occupied in 2021 as well as a detailed projection of the energy costs; calls in that regard for green energy savings;
 - an analysis of the impact on human resources, especially on translators and interpreters, of the Directorate-General for Translation project in the

event of a tool being deployed that is able to automatically transcribe and translate parliamentary multilingual debates in real time;

- a transparent decision-making process in the field of buildings policy;
- (f) asks the Bureau to make known its decision on the future of the Spaak building in Brussels and a detailed breakdown of the costs at the end of the architectural competition launched by Parliament in 2020 for its renovation or replacement; recalls that the 2021 Budget includes items for the preparation of the works in the Spaak building;
- (g) recalls the recommendations contained in Parliament's resolutions of 26 October 2017¹, 11 September 2018² and 15 January 2019³ on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the Union as well as measures to prevent and combat mobbing and sexual harassment; acknowledges the measures taken by the Secretary-General to prevent and combat such events; demands that the Secretary-General provide all information on the programme for the near future; asks the Secretary-General to provide an assessment of the new harassment procedures before presenting the 2022 estimates to the Bureau; is of the opinion that staff as well as Members should be encouraged to participate in training courses to minimise the occurrence of such events inside Parliament;
- (h) recalls the request from the Bureau to the Secretary-General to investigate as soon as legally possible ways to ensure the sustainable financing of the Voluntary Pension Fund;
- (i) recalls its request to the Secretary-General to verify that the highest standards of labour law are being upheld by external contractors with respect to cleaning workers in the Parliament, as well as for the workers in the self-service restaurants, in particular as regards psychological pressure and working conditions arising from the COVID-19 crisis;

Other sections (Sections IV-X)

84. Notes that, in the main, the DB reflects the estimates of the various institutions falling within the other sections of the budget and therefore matches, with some exceptions, their financial requirements; considers that the horizontal and systematic cuts proposed by the Council would therefore have a deleterious effect on the working of the institutions concerned and consequently on the vital contribution they make to the functioning of the Union; on that account, proposes to restore the levels of the DB in almost all cases, including with regard to the establishment plans of the Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Ombudsman and the EEAS; in line with the gentlemen's agreement, does not modify the Council's reading concerning the Council and the European Council;
85. Considers that, in a limited number of cases and taking into account the institutions'

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0417.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0331.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0010.

estimates, it is necessary to increase lines above the DB; proposes therefore:

- (a) in relation to the European Economic and Social Committee and the CoR, to increase the appropriations above the DB for a few lines, so as to maintain a level of appropriations in line with their estimates;
- (b) in relation to the European External Action Service to increase the appropriations above the DB for the line 2214 “Strategic Communication Capacity” and the line 3001 “External staff and outside services”;

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86. 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.