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P9_TA(2019)0038

General budget of the European Union for 2020 — all sections

European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2019 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020 (11734/2019 — C9-0119/2019 — 2019/2028(BUD))

(2021/C 202/25)

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 Union ([1]),

— 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 966/2012 ([2]),

— having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ([3]) (the 'MFF Regulation'),

— 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 management ([4]),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2019 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2020 budget, Section III — Commission ([5]),

— having regard to its resolution of 28 March 2019 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2020 ([6]),

— having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020, which the Commission adopted on 5 July 2019 (COM(2019)0400) (the 'DB'),

— having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020, which the Council adopted on 3 September 2019 and forwarded to Parliament on 13 September 2019 (11734/2019 — C9-0119/2019),

— having regard to Article 2.1c of the Paris Agreement, ratified by the European Union on 5 October 2016,

— having regard to the Landscape review of the European Court of Auditors, entitled 'EU action on energy and climate change' (2017),

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([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.
([5]) Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0210.
([6]) Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0326.

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— having regard to the Commission communication 'A Clean Planet for all — A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy' (COM(2018)0773),

— having regard to Rule 94 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the opinions of the other committees concerned,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A9-0017/2019),

Section III

General overview

1. Recalls that, in its resolution of 14 March 2019 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2020 budget, Parliament defined clear political priorities for the 2020 budget to be a bridge to the future Europe and provide European added value; reaffirms its strong commitment to those priorities and sets out the following position to ensure an appropriate level of financing to deliver on them;

2. Reiterates Parliament's view that the 2020 budget should pave the way for the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and provide a solid starting point for the launch of the new generation of Union programmes and policies; recalls, moreover, that 2020 is the last year of the current MFF and, therefore, the last chance for the Union to come closer to meeting the political commitments set for that period, including towards reaching the EU climate target and implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Union's target to reach a carbon-neutral economy by 2050; stresses, in that context, that the Union budget must evaluate and integrate the full impact of Union policies on gender equality (gender budgeting), thus promoting gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities;

3. Takes note of Council's position on the DB, cutting EUR 1,51 billion in commitment appropriations compared to the Commission's proposal; considers that the Council's cuts flatly contradict the Union's priorities, are not justified by absorption capacity and are meant to revert all the specific increases requested and obtained by Parliament in previous budgetary years; decides therefore, as a general rule, to restore appropriations on all lines cut by the Council to the level of the DB, for both operational and administrative expenditure, and to take the DB as the starting point to build its position upon;

4. Strongly believes that it is imperative to tackle the climate challenge and to protect the environment in a way that boosts employment, creates new jobs, strengthens competitiveness, promotes sustainable development and ensures social prosperity; underlines the key role of new and emerging technologies in achieving that objective; stresses the need for the Union to lead by example and inspire other countries around the globe to invest further in climate-related expenditure; welcomes the powerful calls for action made by Union leaders at the recent UN climate change summit and the commitments made recently by several Member States to ramp up spending in areas such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport and energy infrastructure; believes that such declarations should be matched by concrete action by the Member States including when deliberating as Council;

5. Recalls the Union's obligations under the Paris Agreement and the Union's commitment to reach a target of 20 % of climate-related Union expenditure for the period 2014-2020; notes that 21,0 % of the commitment appropriations proposed in the DB for 2020 are climate-related and that at least additional EUR 3,5 billion would have to be dedicated to climate-related expenditure in order to reach the 20 % target; regrets that, under the current MFF, the Union budget has limited means to address the climate challenge on its own and points to the much higher needs for investment in this area, estimated by the Commission in the range of EUR 175 to 290 billion a year; stresses that every effort should be made to come as close as possible to reaching the overall Union budget target by the end of 2020;

6. Underlines that the 2020 budget should prepare the Union for an even more ambitious target for climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in the 2021-2027 MFF, in order to meet the expectations of European citizens; demands a more transparent, stringent and comprehensive methodology, set up in line with internationally established methodologies, including reformed performance indicators for defining and tracking climate- and biodiversity-relevant expenditure; looks

forward to the concrete proposal on the European Green Deal, as outlined in the political guidelines of the incoming Commission president-elect; recalls, in this context, its strong commitment to the reform of the Union own resources systems, including the introduction of a basket of new own resources that are better aligned with major Union policy priorities, including the fight against climate change;

7. Recalls the commitment set out in its March 2019 resolution to ask the Commission for a mandatory clause in all EU trade agreements with third countries demanding the ratification and implementation of the Paris Agreement to fight climate change;

8. Proposes, therefore, a 2020 budget that makes an important contribution to tackling environmental challenges and climate change and offsets as much as possible the existing backlog towards reaching the target of 20 % of climate-related Union expenditure for the period 2014-2020; proposes a significant reinforcement by more than EUR 2 billion above DB levels for budget lines across different Headings, and predominantly in Subheading 1a, which make a high contribution towards the climate-expenditure target; carefully targets those reinforcements towards lines that have an excellent implementation rate and the operational capacity to absorb the additional appropriations in 2020;

9. Emphasises that youth remains an overarching priority for the Union budget; highlights that despite the positive trends towards a decline in youth unemployment rates in the Union, the lack of future opportunities for young people is a real social emergency in certain parts of the Union, with significant disparities across the Member States and regions; decides therefore to reinforce the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) above the level proposed by the Commission, also in order to ensure a smooth transition towards the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) in the next MFF;

10. Underlines that the Union must meet all its commitments in full with regards to aiding developing countries combat and adapt to climate change;

11. Reinforces the financial resources to meet future demand for Erasmus+, the primary programme for education and training, including vocational education and training, youth and sport in Europe; stresses that Erasmus+ is a key flagship programme of the Union that is widely known among its citizens and has delivered tangible results with a clear European added value; recalls its commitment to triple the funding for this programme in the MFF 2021-2027; emphasises the need to continue and further reinforce the DiscoverEU preparatory action, in view of its programmed integration in the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme; calls for special emphasis to be placed to mobility actions in adult education, particularly for the senior population in the Erasmus+ programme;

12. Proposes further targeted reinforcements to other budget lines related to Parliament's priorities, in areas such as SMEs, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, cancer research, security and justice cooperation, customs, migration and external policy including development and humanitarian aid;

13. Endorses, as a general rule, the Commission's estimates of the budgetary needs of decentralised agencies; considers, therefore, that any cuts proposed by the Council would endanger the proper functioning of the agencies and would not allow them to fulfil their tasks; proposes targeted increases to the level of appropriations of agencies which will be dealing with additional tasks or which are confronted with increased workload due to emerging challenges;

14. Concludes that, for the purpose of adequately financing the pressing priorities expressed above, and considering the very tight or inexistent margins under certain Headings in 2020, the Flexibility Instrument and the Global Margin for Commitments need to be fully mobilised, the Contingency Margin needs to be mobilised, while part of it also remains available for the financing of unforeseen events that may occur in the course of next year; also recalls that flexibilities set out in the MFF Regulation will lapse at the end of that period;

15. Stresses the need to fully re-use de-commitments for research as laid down in Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation; strongly regrets that the Council rejects again the application of that legislative provision that the Commission proposed to partly activate in the DB; declares its intention to insist on its position that reflects both the letter and the spirit of the Financial Regulation; intends to resolve this issue in this year's budgetary conciliation; proposes to fully reuse these de-commitments to reinforce the four budget lines of the Horizon 2020 programme with the highest level of climate-related research activity;

16. Sets the overall level of appropriations for the 2020 budget (all sections) at EUR 170 971 519 973 in commitment appropriations, representing an increase of EUR 2 699 813 994 compared to the DB; decides in addition to make available an amount of EUR 280 700 000 in commitment appropriations further to de-commitments under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation; sets the overall level of appropriations for the 2020 budget (all sections) at EUR 159 146 168 195 in payment appropriations;

Subheading 1a — Competitiveness for growth and jobs

17. Points out that Horizon 2020 provides very strong European added value and makes a vital contribution to the development of green technology and climate- and environment-friendly innovation, so as to lay the foundations for a decarbonised future and support the shift towards a more circular economy; stresses, moreover, the importance of the programme for other significant areas of European research such as digitalisation, artificial intelligence and cancer research; significantly increases, therefore, the allocation of Horizon 2020 over the level of the DB by EUR 737,8 million in commitment appropriations; furthermore, in accordance with Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation, makes available the entire amount of EUR 280,7 million in commitment appropriations de-committed in 2018 as a result of non-implementation of research projects, for the budget lines of Horizon 2020 that are most relevant to climate-related research projects, and calls on the Commission to pay special attention to the fair geographical distribution of those funds;

18. Is convinced that the fight against cancer should be an absolute priority for the Union, and that significant efforts need to be stepped up in this direction; underlines the fact that cancer research is an important pillar in this process; adopts, therefore, an increase of financial resources to be earmarked for cancer research under the relevant budget lines of Horizon 2020 that also demonstrate a very high budgetary execution; stresses that research intensifies in this field without any delay, also in view of more substantial investments anticipated in the next MFF;

19. Recalls that Europe's position as a leading provider for information and communication technologies (ICT) depends on the resources for developing and testing new ICT technologies as well as providing assistance to start-ups and technology enterprises in order to augment market relevant capacity; in this regard reiterates the need to provide additional funding to European research facilities and SME businesses with a focus on developing and advancing technologies such as search engines, translation services and similar ground-breaking technologies;

20. Highlights the crucial role of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in fostering the strategic development of a high-performance trans-European network that is sustainable and interconnected across the areas of transport, with a special focus on the rail network including night trains, energy and ICT infrastructure and significantly contributes to the transition towards a climate-neutral society; proposes therefore to increase the funding for CEF-Transport and CEF- Energy by a total amount of EUR 545 million in commitment appropriations above DB levels;

21. Considers that it is also necessary to strengthen further important priorities in this Subheading; points in that regard to SMEs, which are an essential part of the Union economy and play a crucial role in delivering excellent quality investment and job creation in all Member States; adopts, in this context, an increase to the COSME programme, in order to further boost the programme's potential in promoting entrepreneurship, including women's entrepreneurship, improving the competitiveness and access to markets of Union enterprises, and calls for emphasis to be placed on the digital transformation of SMEs; recalls that the proposed allocation in the DB for COSME was even below what was foreseen in the financial programming and adopts an increase of EUR 50 million in commitment appropriations above DB levels;

22. Emphasises that Erasmus+ remains a highly valued and hugely popular programme, with a volume of applications that far exceeds the funding available, and that it helps foster a strong sense of shared European identity; adopts, therefore, an increase of EUR 123,4 million in commitment appropriations above DB levels, in order to fight the low success rates and allow for more people to benefit from this programme;

23. Proposes targeted increases to the level of appropriations for the European Labour Authority (ELA), the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, the European Union Agency for Railways, the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), and to the level of appropriations and the staff for the European GNSS Agency, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) Office and the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER);

24. Increases therefore the level of commitment appropriations for Subheading 1a by EUR 1 503 766 221 above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed by using the available margin and mobilising the special instruments; in addition, makes available to this Subheading an amount of EUR 280 700 000 in commitment appropriations further to de-commitments under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation;

Subheading 1b — Economic, social and territorial cohesion

25. Recalls that sustainable growth and well-targeted investment are the key to creation of quality jobs and increased prosperity for all and that it is therefore necessary to direct the structural funds and investments more effectively towards promoting inclusive growth, reducing inequalities and boosting upward social convergence;

26. Regrets that the level of youth unemployment, estimated at 14,2 % in April 2019, remains unacceptably high and remains particularly acute in some Member States and regions of the Union; underlines the importance of reinforcing the employability and entrepreneurial capacity of young people while tackling inequalities; is convinced that the fight against unemployment requires substantial financial efforts; is determined to ensure additional funding for the YEI programme in the last year of the current MFF; underlines the need to accelerate the implementation of that programme and to further improve its efficiency, so as to ensure that it brings more European added value to national employment policies; proposes therefore an increase of EUR 363,3 million above DB levels in commitment appropriations for the YEI;

27. Steps up funding for technical assistance, to address the complexity of project management procedures, from the preparation of applications to financial management and impact monitoring, which is a major obstacle to a better absorption of 'Structural Funds';

28. Increases the level of commitment appropriations for Subheading 1b by EUR 373 278 264 above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed by mobilising the special instruments;

Heading 2 — Sustainable growth: natural resources

29. Notes with concern that only 8,3 % of total commitments are related to reversing the decline in biodiversity again, which is the lowest ratio since 2015, despite the unprecedented and accelerating species extinction rate observed; calls for sufficient increases and traceable resources to be allocated to ensure the long-term and coherent protection of biodiversity across the Union; in line with the overall priority of tackling climate change, focuses substantial increases worth EUR 233 million in commitment appropriations on budget lines pertaining to the LIFE+ programme in Titles 7 and 34; expects the Commission to warrant the necessary absorption capacity for an effective use of those additional means and ensure a fairer geographical distribution of such environment-friendly funds as will be the case in the programmes of the next MFF;

30. Proposes necessary increases for selected budget lines, in particular for the financing of measures to address the impact of African swine fever in several Member States; notes a severe impact and a big number of outbreaks registered since the beginning of 2019, with tens of thousands of animals being culled; notes that third countries have invested in research for developing a vaccine against ASF and the Union should be investing in research and development of a vaccine, which would help eradicate the spread and occurrence of ASF in the shortest possible time;

31. Recalls that the level of appropriations of the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) will still need to be adjusted by taking into account of the assigned revenue expected to be available in 2020 as communicated in the Commission's Amending Letter;

32. Proposes a targeted increase to the level of appropriations and the staff for the European Environment Agency;

33. In summary, increases commitment appropriations by EUR 267,3 million in Heading 2 (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed using the available margin under the ceiling; stresses that there should be no further cuts to the agricultural budget, since the agricultural sector is frequently affected by crises that require a budgetary response;

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Heading 3 — Security and Citizenship

34. Reinforces, against the background of an unrealistically low ceiling since the beginning of the current MFF, funding for Parliament's priorities in the fields of internal security, migration, fundamental rights and respect for the rule of law and to promote non-discrimination and equality and fight gender-based violence; strongly objects to Council's cuts to the Internal Security Fund (ISF) and Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and rejects the Council's proposal to move EUR 400 million in AMIF commitment appropriations into a reserve awaiting a break-through on the reform of the Dublin III Regulation ([7]) as this would prevent frontline Member States receiving support to manage the migratory pressure in a humane manner;

35. Underlines that it is of paramount importance to invest in adequate funding and staffing levels for all agencies operating in the fields of migration, security, border control and fundamental rights, in particular Europol, Eurojust, EPPO, Frontex and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA); stresses that EPPO must be equipped with the necessary means in order to be able to thoroughly investigate and prosecute cross-border criminal activities;

36. Calls on the Commission to urgently create a fund aimed at supporting search and rescue operations in order to guarantee a strong SAR presence in the Mediterranean;

37. Reaffirms its willingness to use the Union budget as a tool for effectively combatting existing inequalities and promoting gender equality, in particular through increased resources for the Daphne-specific objective of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme and for human development under the Development Cooperation Instrument; emphasises the need for sufficient funding to fight gender-based violence and violence against refugee women and girls and other vulnerable groups such as LGBTQI+ people;

38. Proposes a 10 % increase in commitment appropriations for the MEDIA and Culture sub-programmes of the Creative Europe programme, in order to remedy their chronic underfunding and low application success rates; also increases appropriations for multimedia actions, which are crucial in tackling disinformation and promoting independent journalism;

39. Also proposes a targeted increase to the Union contribution to the European Medicines Agency;

40. Reinforces therefore Heading 3 by EUR 121 799 746 in commitment appropriations above DB levels (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed by a further mobilisation of special instruments;

Heading 4 — Global Europe

41. Underlines the need for the Union budget to contribute more to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures as well as climate diplomacy in the countries covered by the Development Cooperation Instrument and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism; points out the possibility for the Union budget to provide financial assistance for disaster risk reduction and to mobilise innovative financial instruments, including the EU external investment plan, to support the preparation and the financing of climate-related development projects in Africa;

42. Proposes a substantial increase in funding for the Western Balkans countries under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, especially in the areas of functioning democratic institutions, rule of law, good governance and public administration; underlines the importance of a meaningful financing in view of the numerous challenges that the Union together with Member States will need to face in the European Neighbourhood for supporting political reforms and to align with the acquis in the Western Balkans;

([7]) Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 31).

43. Recalls that, given the persisting security threats and the deterioration of the security environment at the Union's Eastern borders as well as the challenging reforms Eastern European partners are confronted with, it is important to provide sufficient funding in support of crisis and conflict prevention, stability, democracy and confidence-building and to step up efforts to support poverty reduction and economic development in the region; further recalls that the countries of the Southern neighbourhood need additional financial support, since they are facing enormous pressure, including the conflicts in Syria and Libya, the rise of extremism and the related refugee and migrant movements;

44. Is strongly concerned by the US decision to withdraw its annual financial contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and believes that the Union should contribute to compensating the resulting gap; recognises the effective role performed by UNRWA in preserving uninterrupted basic services to millions of Palestinian refugees, contributing to regional stability and countering radicalisation, in line with the EU Global Strategy in the Middle East.

45. Is deeply concerned by the decision of the US Administration to impose tariffs on several EU products as a consequence of the World Trade Organization's arbitration panel ruling in the Airbus case; is committed to addressing that issue in the upcoming conciliation period of the 2020 budgetary procedure, by providing necessary increases for selected budget lines, in particular for the financing of measures to address and mitigate the impact of US trade barriers on Union businesses.

46. 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, the wellbeing of Maronites wishing to resettle and that of all enclaved persons as agreed in the 3rd Vienna Agreement, and of supporting the bicommunal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, thereby promoting trust and reconciliation between the two communities;

47. Stresses the responsibility of the Union to support the protection of the Arctic; underlines the importance of investing into a more coherent EU Arctic policy;

48. Calls for increased funding for projects focussed on supporting refugees from Venezuela who have fled to the neighbouring countries including Member State territories in the Caribbean;

49. Believes that given the serious and persistent effort of Turkey to compromise regional stability with aggressive behaviour against Member States, as well as its recent unilateral military action in North East Syria targeting the Kurdish population, further displacing Syrian refugees and severely hindering access to humanitarian assistance, resulting in severe civilian suffering, undermining the stability of the whole region as well as its deficits in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, it is justified to cut the allocations for Turkey under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and to freeze EUR 100 million (amount to be put in reserve); underlines however that the freeze and cut should not target civil society, Syrian refugees or students in Turkey;

50. Condemns the Turkish invasion of North-eastern Syria, which is causing a high number of casualties among the civilian population, increasing the number of refugees and further destabilising the region; therefore, in light of the ongoing developments, plans to intervene accordingly by adjusting its position on the budget lines dedicated to Turkey, while at the same time preserving financial support to civil society actors, during the conciliation for the 2020 annual budget.

51. Deplores the limited role the Parliament has in the supervision and governance of the EUTF; considers it fundamental that the Parliament is able to monitor the activities of the Operational Committee and calls on the Commission to provide detailed information on the decisions taken in that Committee and ensure that the Parliament is represented at its meetings;

52. Reinforces Heading 4 overall by EUR 257 217 394 above DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed by further mobilisation of special instruments;

Heading 5 — Administration; Other Headings — administrative and research support expenditure

53. Restores DB levels for administrative expenditure lines, including administrative and research support expenditure in Headings 1 to 4; proposes an increase of EUR 5,5 million in commitment appropriations above the DB for a Conference on European Democracy/Future of Europe; points out that the Conference should be able to function with the necessary degree of autonomy and the involvement of the Parliament on equal footing with the other European institutions; underlines furthermore that the Conference should allow for the participation and engagement of a broad range of citizens including young people;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

54. 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; stresses, in this regard, for those paving the way for new programmes supported by the current Commission President and the Parliament such as the Just Transition Fund, that the Commission should pay particular attention to implement them in the form that would gather the widest support from the Parliament; having carried out a careful analysis of all the proposals submitted and taking fully into account the Commission's assessment of their respect of legal requirements and implementability, adopts 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

55. Points to the unprecedented margin of EUR 20 067,6 million left under the payment ceiling in the DB, as a result of the very late take-off of the 2014-2020 programmes and a corresponding accumulation of unused payments, notably in Subheading 1b; stresses the necessity to prevent a substantial accumulation of payment claims in the beginning of the next MFF that may lead to another payment crisis in the Union budget, as was the case in the current period, and may prevent an orderly start of the next generation of programmes for 2021-2027;

56. Increases, therefore, payments for European Structural and Investment Funds by an overall EUR 3 billion based on the expectation that Member States will further accelerate the implementation of their operational programmes in the last year of the current MFF, and better adhere to their own forecasts; increases the provisioning of the EFSI guarantee fund by EUR 948 million in order to bring forward to 2020, in a budget-neutral manner, those annual instalments which were so far planned for the years 2021 to 2023, i.e. when the pressure on payments is expected to be higher; finally, reinforces payment appropriations on those lines where commitment appropriations are increased;

Other Sections

Section I — European Parliament

57. Restores the appropriations established in the estimates on the basis of a careful and responsible analysis of the needs of Parliament for 2020 and adopted by Plenary in its abovementioned resolution of 28 March 2019 with a large majority; is aware that Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union allows the Commission to adjust the draft estimates of the other Institutions; expresses nonetheless its surprise and deep concern at the Commission's cuts in Parliament's budget, which breaks the tradition of good cooperation between the two institutions.

58. Increases two lines above the DB, due to new elements impacting the transitional allowances for 2020 budget, which it was not possible to prevent, namely: the higher non re-election rate following the European elections (63 %, whilst an average of 50 % served as the calculation base) and the postponement of Brexit until 31 October 2019; increases also the line on European political foundations, since their work is crucial in promoting democracy and fighting fake news and disinformation;

59. In line with the estimates adopted by the Parliament:

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 calls for a transparent decision-making process in the field of buildings policy; disagrees therefore, with the on-going practice of the year-end 'mopping-up transfer' to contribute to current building projects, which takes place systematically on the same chapters, titles and, often, exactly on the same budgetary lines; considers that the building policy should be financed in a transparent manner from budgetary lines dedicated to it;

c) recalls its request to the Bureau to take action for 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 as from 1 January 2020;

d) reiterates its call on the Conference of Presidents and the Bureau to revise the implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union; 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;

e) asks the Secretary General to swiftly present the implementation rules to ensure the statutory rights of APAs in order to avoid discretional interpretation and the current inequalities that prevent from the full exercise of their work as stated under the Members' and Assistants' Statutes;

f) asks for the full implementation of the measures recommended in Parliament's resolution of 26 October 2017 on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the European Union ([8]), namely the implementation of the anti-harassment training for all staff and Members, the external audit of the two existing anti-harassment committees as well as the re-structuring of the two existing committees into one independent committee, with doctors and lawyers as standing members; requests further support to cover the cost of additional staff that are competent to manage harassment cases within Parliament, bringing together in a dedicated service staff with expert medical, psychological, legal, and human resources management background and to cover the judicial and medical expenses of victims of harassment in accordance with Article 24 of the Staff Regulations;

g) reiterates its request to the Secretary General for detailed estimations and coast breakdown of the preparatory technical works in the SPAAK building in view of renovation, projected at EUR 12,4 million;

h) reiterates its call on a greater use of videoconferences and other technologies in order to protect the environment and to save resources, in particular to reduce staff duty travel between the three places of works;

Other sections (Sections IV-X)

60. 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 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 European Data Protection Supervisor and the European External Action Service; in line with the gentlemen's agreement, does not modify the Council's reading concerning the Council and the European Council;

61. Considers that, in a limited number of cases and taking into account the institutions' estimates, it is necessary to increase lines above the DB and to suggest additional posts; proposes therefore:

a) in relation to the Court of Justice and on account of its increasing workload, to restore the 11 posts proposed by the Court in its estimates (7 AD posts and 4 AST), which the Commission did not include in the DB, and to provide the necessary appropriations for remunerations and allowances;

b) in relation to the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, to increase the appropriations above the DB for a few lines, so as to maintain a level of appropriations similar to last year's;

([8]) Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0417.

c) in relation to the European Ombudsman, to add two AD posts above the DB, combined with minor cuts to three budget lines, in order to balance the amounts restored to two other lines;

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62. 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.