Wednesday 19 October 2022

P9_TA(2022)0366

General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023 — all sections

European Parliament resolution of 19 October 2022 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023 (12108/2022 — C9-0306/2022 — 2022/0212(BUD))

(2023/C 149/12)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

— having regard to Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,

— having regard to Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2020/2053 of 14 December 2020 on the system of own resources of the European Union and repealing Decision 2014/335/EU, Euratom [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] (the 'Financial Regulation'),

— having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 [3] (the 'MFF Regulation'), and to the joint declarations agreed between Parliament, the Council and the Commission in this context [4], as well as to the related unilateral declarations [5],

— having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources [6],

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) [7],

— having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine — reinforcing the EU's capacity to act [8],

— having regard to the Communication from the Commission of 11 December 2019 on 'The European Green Deal' (COM(2019)0640), and its resolution thereon of 15 January 2020 [9],

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[1] OJ L 424, 15.12.2020, p. 1.
[2] OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.
[3] OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.
[4] OJ C 444 I, 22.12.2020.
[5] European Parliament legislative resolution of 16 December 2020 on the draft Council regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027, Annex 2: Declarations (Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0357).
[6] OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.
[7] OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1.
[8] Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0219.
[9] Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.

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— having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) special report on global warming of 1,5 °C, its special report on climate change and land, and its special report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate,

— having regard to the Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) in Paris on 12 December 2015 (the 'Paris Agreement'),

— having regard to Special Report 22/2021 of the European Court of Auditors: 'Sustainable finance. More consistent EU action needed to redirect finance towards sustainable investment',

— having regard to Special Report 09/2022 of the European Court of Auditors: 'Climate spending in the 2014-2020 EU budget — Not as high as reported',

— having regard to Special Report 10/2021 of the European Court of Auditors: 'Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action',

— having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals,

— having regard to its resolution of 8 July 2021 on the Annual Report on the Functioning of the Schengen Area ([10]),

— having regard to the proposal of 22 April 2022 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (COM(2022)0184), and the report A9-0230/2022 thereon, adopted on 8 September 2022 by the Committee on Budgets and by the Committee on Budgetary Control and endorsed at Parliament's part-session of 12- 15 September 2022,

— having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights and its resolution of 19 January 2017 thereon ([11]),

— having regard to the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025,

— having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget ([12]),

— having regard to its resolution of 5 April 2022 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2023 budget, Section III — Commission ([13]),

— having regard to its resolution of 7 April 2022 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2023 ([14]),

— having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023, which the Commission adopted on 1 July 2022 (COM(2022)0400) (the 'DB'), and to Amending Letter No 1 thereto (COM(2022)0670)),

— having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023, which the Council adopted on 6 September 2022 and forwarded to Parliament on 9 September 2022 (12108/2022 — C9-0306/2022),

— 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 (A9-0241/2022),

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([10]) OJ C 99, 1.3.2022, p. 158.
([11]) Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0010.
([12]) OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 1.
([13]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0106.
([14]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0127.

General overview of Section III

1. Recalls that, in its resolution of 5 April 2022 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2023 budget, Parliament set clear political priorities for the 2023 budget; reaffirms its strong commitment to those priorities and sets out the following position to ensure an appropriate level of financing to deliver on them; believes that the Union must be equipped with all possible budgetary means to respond to current crises and focus on people's needs;

2. whereas the European Union budget should promote public investment by supporting productive and strategic sectors, public services, the creation of jobs with rights, the fight against poverty, social exclusion and inequalities, the protection of the environment and the full use of the potential of each country and region, together with the pursuit of external relations rooted in solidarity, cooperation, mutual respect and the promotion and safeguarding of peace;

3. Stresses that the Union faces an extraordinarily complex set of challenges, including the direct and indirect repercussions of the war in Ukraine, high inflation, increasing poverty, high energy prices and security of supply risks, a worsening economic outlook, in particular for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the most vulnerable households, the need to secure a just, inclusive and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, crises in many other parts of the world, technological change, including increasing digitalisation, gender inequality, as well as the growing urgency to tackle climate change and the biodiversity crisis and their consequences and the need to accelerate the just transition, including through investments in energy efficiency; considers that the Union budget should contribute to tackling those challenges and provide adequate support for all, while expressing concern at the exceptionally limited margins, which are about one third of last year's, or, in the case of Heading 6, the lack of margin, and the limited flexibility and crisis response capacity built into the budget; considers that it is indispensable, especially in a time of war, to boost investment and tackle unemployment and to lay the foundations for a more resilient and sustainable Union, while focusing on concrete actions to deal with the consequences of the war in the world as well; deplores the fact that the DB is an insufficient response to the current challenges; recalls that the multiannual financial framework (MFF) was not established to address a pandemic, a war, high inflation, high energy prices, high numbers of refugees, new accessions, food insecurity, and a humanitarian crises;

4. Regrets the Council position on the DB, which cuts EUR 1,64 billion in commitment appropriations and EUR 530 million in payment appropriations for the MFF headings compared to the Commission's proposal; considers that the cuts proposed by the Council neither reflect the seriousness of the above-mentioned challenges facing the Union and its citizens nor are driven by an objective assessment of either implementation trends or absorption capacities and run counter to core shared policy priorities, putting at risk the ability of the Union to successfully implement its key political objectives and priorities; considers that the Council should not target programmes that benefit from the adjustment provided for in Article 5 of the MFF Regulation for 'rebalancing and stabilisation', since that would contradict the objective of that Article, which was to strengthen specific political priorities; recalls in particular that that Article does not provide 'top ups', as suggested by the Council; concludes that the Council's position is far from Parliament's expectations; decides therefore, as a general rule, to restore appropriations on 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 for Parliament's position;

5. Maintains the appropriations entered in the DB for the thematic special instruments, namely the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers and the Brexit Adjustment Reserve; considers that, bearing in mind the unforeseen, extraordinary and unprecedented challenges faced by the Union, the full amount of the Flexibility Instrument should be used; considers, given the current grave interlocking crises, that it is necessary to mobilise the 2021 margins under compartment (a) of the Single Margin Instrument and additional appropriations under compartment (c) of that Instrument;

6. Recalls its long-standing position that new policy priorities or tasks should be accompanied by fresh resources; intends to follow that approach for the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem (Chips Act) (COM(2022)0046) and the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027 (COM(2022)0057); welcomes in that sense the fact that the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European defence industry reinforcement through common procurement act (COM(2022)0349) does not entail redeployments from, or earmarking within, other programmes;

7. Considers that the Union budget, on account of its size, structure and rules, has a very limited capacity to respond appropriately to the challenges facing the Union or to adequately finance and implement new shared Union policy ambitions or initiatives announced in the Commission's President's 2022 State of the Union address; recalls in particular that the Heads of State or Government have described the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine as a 'tectonic shift in European history' and that the Commission has stated that the 'unforeseen needs created by war in Europe are well beyond the means available in the current Multiannual Financial Framework', necessitating new financing sources; underlines that the Union should take a leading role in making available sufficient, timely and reliable support to Ukraine together with international partners; is of the view that this is a further demonstration of the urgent need for a substantial revision of the MFF, to be submitted as soon as possible and no later than the first quarter of 2023, including to make it more flexible, raise the ceilings where necessary to reflect emerging needs and new priorities and to address the problems generated by including the European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI) financing costs in Heading 2b;

8. Underlines the fact that real progress on new own resources is essential both for EURI repayments for NextGenerationEU (NGEU) implementation and for the financial robustness and implementation of the current and future multiannual financial frameworks; calls on the Commission to ensure timely introduction of new own resources, in line with the roadmap set out in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020, and to accelerate the proposal for the second basket; urges the Council to respect the agreed timing and to make necessary progress on the own resources contained in the first basket proposed by the Commission on 22 December 2021, with a view to their prompt implementation;

9. Stresses the need to respond to the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation and increasing energy and food insecurity at Union level; stresses in particular the need for sufficient green investments to strengthen the Union's energy independence and implement the Green Deal; recalls that cohesion and agriculture policy cannot be the main source of the financing of urgent priorities, jeopardising the implementation of long-term objectives and highlights the need for support for regions badly hit by the pandemic and the energy crisis; calls on the Commission, in light of limited resources from the Union budget, to respond to high energy prices, to analyse potential flexibilities and additional resources, including any unused funds, including from the 2014-2020 MFF, in order to support SMEs and vulnerable households;

10. Considers that the Union should take concerted action to tackle the energy crisis and proposes very substantial additional investments in that field; recalls that further financial resources will be needed beyond the 2023 budget to achieve that objective; recalls, therefore, the importance of providing additional financial support through REPowerEU; calls for a prompt agreement on, and implementation of, REPowerEU so that funds can be released as soon as possible with a view to swiftly increasing the Union's energy independence through strategic investments, including support for SMEs and vulnerable households;

11. Welcomes the Commission's work on a new classification to measure the gender impact of Union spending; calls on the Commission to ensure that this classification focuses an accurate and comprehensive representation of the impact of programmes on gender equality, with a view to getting the best gender equality impact from programmes that are currently categorized as zero (star) and to learning lessons for the design of the programmes; moreover calls for an extension of that classification to all MFF programmes in order to demonstrate results for the 2023 budget; stresses, in this regard, the need for systematic collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data; expects all gender-relevant reporting to be done on the basis of volumes and not number of actions;

12. Expresses its deep concern that the Commission has recently financed or co-financed campaigns promoting the hijab, stating for example that 'freedom is in hijab'; stresses that the Union budget should not finance any future campaign that may promote the hijab;

13. Expects climate and biodiversity mainstreaming targets to be achieved; in this regard welcomes efforts to achieve more transparent and comprehensive reporting and emphasises the need to carry out sufficient ex-post evaluations and to work on the granularity of the data available; calls again on the Commission to address the conclusions of the European Court of Auditors regarding overstated climate spending; welcomes as well the reporting on biodiversity-related expenditure; nevertheless expresses concern that the 2026 and 2027 targets might not be reached and calls on the Commission to enhance its efforts to reach the targets; calls on the Commission to publish the amounts and shares of expenditure that will contribute to both targets per programme when presenting the draft budget; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the DNSH and to take necessary corrective measures if and when needed;

14. Reiterates the need for the 2023 budget to reflect the implementation of the recommendations endorsed by the Conference on the Future of Europe;

15. Sets, therefore, the overall level of appropriations for the 2023 budget (all sections) at EUR 187 293 119 206 in commitment appropriations, representing an increase of EUR 1 702 055 778 compared to the DB; decides in addition to make available an amount of EUR 836 090 000 in commitment appropriations further to decommitments under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation; sets the overall level of appropriations for the 2023 budget (all sections) at EUR 167 612 834 087 in payment appropriations;

Heading 1 — Single market, Innovation and Digital

16. Underlines the significant contribution of Heading 1 to addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine as well as to reaching the Union's climate and energy targets, inter alia to reduce Union dependence on fossil fuels, including from Russia, by supporting research and investment in sustainable energy and transport sectors; reiterates the potential of the programmes of this heading in anchoring Ukraine in the Single Market, infrastructure network and research area;

17. Supports the proposal in the DB to make EUR 78,8 million available in decommitments for the three clusters referred to in the relevant Joint political statement attached to the Horizon Europe regulation ([15]); notes, however, that the remaining 2021 and 2020 research decommitments amount to EUR 836,09 million; insists, against the backdrop of limited available resources and considerable needs, that this unexpectedly high amount of research decommitments, which was not forecast by the Commission during the MFF negotiations, should be made available in full for Horizon Europe, in compliance with Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation; recalls the very high Union added value and excellent implementation rate of that programme; believes strongly, therefore, that the remaining amounts should provide significant increases for key research priorities, such as health (including Long Covid and Post Covid, such as for clinical trials), climate, mobility and energy, culture and creativity, including for the further development of the New European Bauhaus, and food, bioeconomy, natural resources and the environment, in order to tackle the pressing challenges faced by the Union and to provide additional support to researchers through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, including researchers from Ukraine, with a specific focus on the European Green Deal, the Digital Agenda and making Europe stronger in the world;

18. Underlines its deep concern about the proposed management mode of the European Innovation Council Fund and calls on the Commission to engage in an open dialogue with Parliament on the management mode of the Fund to ensure proper budgetary implementation;

([15]) Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe — the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 (OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 1).

19. Reverses the redeployments proposed by the Commission to fund the Chips Act and the Secure Connectivity Programme, in line with its position that new initiatives should be funded using fresh money, and deletes the relevant Council reserves, thereby ensuring a proper level of funding for priorities in Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe Programme and the Union Space Programme; makes research decommitments available again to compensate for earmarking under Horizon Europe for the Chips Act and the Secure Connectivity Programme, so that those new proposals do not detract from existing research priorities; emphasises that the absorption of funds from NGEU cannot be used to justify not implementing Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation and not using substantial amounts of decommitments in a time of crises;

20. Recalls that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is key to spurring investment in the development of high performance and sustainable trans-European networks; stresses that CEF must play a crucial role in decarbonising the Union economy by supporting alternative fuel infrastructure and renewable energy, thereby accelerating the green transition and increasing the Union's energy independence and security, and promotes interconnectivity across the Union territory, including with the Iberian peninsula and with remote, sparsely populated regions; underlines that Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked military attack against Ukraine calls for urgent support to transport infrastructure in and towards Ukraine (solidarity lanes), to enable the transport of critical goods in both directions; proposes, therefore, to increase the funding of the Transport and Energy strands of CEF by a total amount of EUR 90 million in commitment appropriations above the level of the DB;

21. Stresses that a well-functioning Single Market is at the heart of Union's recovery and long-term competitiveness; underlines the importance of preserving and adapting it in the context of numerous challenges; calls on the Commission to make the necessary proposals, including in the frame of the amending letter, to bridge any possible gap between the entry into force of the Digital Services Act and the recovery of the supervisory fees;

22. Emphasises that businesses and, in particular, SMEs, which constitute the backbone of the European economy, have been severely hit by the current crises, including businesses in the tourism and cultural and creative sectors, which have suffered a severe contraction, and by the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, in particular high energy prices; supports an increase of EUR 10 million above the DB for the SME strand of the Single Market Cluster; proposes also an increase of EUR 1 million above the DB to support the ongoing work of the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) in designing high-quality reporting standards, on the condition that EFRAG adopts a work plan outlining the measures to ensure a proper transparent due process and public oversight as well as a balanced representation of stakeholders;

23. Increases therefore the level of commitment appropriations for Heading 1 by EUR 663 650 000 above the DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed using the available margin and mobilising the special instruments; moreover, makes available to the heading an overall amount of EUR 836 090 000 in commitment appropriations corresponding to decommitments made under Article 15(3) of the Financial Regulation, thereby increasing by EUR 677 278 157 the decommitments made available again compared to the DB;

Sub-heading 2a — Economic, social and territorial cohesion

24. Underlines the pivotal role of cohesion policy as an essential Union investment policy and convergence instrument to promote sustainable growth and support the overall harmonious development of the Member States and their regions, including between and within regions; anticipates that, after a delayed start to the programming process in the first two years of the 2021-2027 MFF, implementation should gather pace in 2022; calls on the Member States and the Commission to accelerate the process of programming in order to allow 2023 to be the start of the implementation of the cohesion funds, which will help to address social, economic and territorial inequalities and boost the Union economy and help the public and private sectors, SMEs, and citizens during these difficult times; underlines the risk of projects being delayed due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine; asks the Commission to assess and, where relevant, to propose the necessary policy adjustments and support measures to ensure continuation and full implementation of all projects;

25. Calls for EU programmes to give priority to projects that promote and uphold the creation of jobs with rights, including stable and regulated pay levels and employment relationships;

26. Accepts the Council position with respect to Sub-heading 2a;

Sub-heading 2b — Resilience and values

27. Reiterates that, despite Parliament's demands to place the EURI over and above the ceilings, the refinancing costs are paid from within Sub-heading 2b; notes that, in the light of the unforeseen situation on financial markets due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which continues to negatively affect the Union economy, setting it on a path of lower growth, higher inflation and rising interest rates, the line dedicated to the EURI financing costs is likely to be needed in full and needs may well exceed the budgeted amount; deplores the fact that this has a de facto impact on programmes under the same heading by constraining the Commission's ability to propose above-financial programming reinforcements where they are needed; notes that EURI financing costs should not be taken from special instruments, which are intended to tackle unforeseen challenges, such as the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis;

28. Proposes, therefore, EUR 200 million above the DB for the flagship Erasmus+ programme — focused on learning mobility in education and training — in line with the need identified by the Commission to provide support to Ukrainian students and teaching staff, as well as to all students to cope with high inflation; underlines that these appropriations will also help to flatten the heavily backloaded financial profile of Erasmus+, providing more consistent annual financing for a programme with stable year-on-year demand; stresses, furthermore, that increased resources will contribute to ongoing efforts to make the programme greener and more inclusive and enable legacy work following the 2022 European Year of Youth; points to the announcement made by President von der Leyen in her State of the Union address that 2023 should be the European Year of Skills, which would require support in the 2023 budget;

29. Recalls that, under the 'sport' strand, Erasmus+ supports not-for-profit sport events aimed at further developing the European dimension of sport and promoting issues of relevance to grassroots sport; underlines the vital role that sport plays in tackling discrimination and promoting social inclusion; supports, therefore, a necessary and targeted reinforcement of EUR 10 million for the 'sport' line to enable the programme to support the Special Olympics taking place in Berlin in 2023;

30. Underlines that the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) helps young people gain practical experience in another Member State, thereby increasing their employability and life chances; stresses, further, that the ESC finances voluntary humanitarian work carried out through the Humanitarian Aid Corps, which can provide important humanitarian assistance outside conflict zones; decides, therefore, to increase appropriations for the ESC by EUR 8 million above the DB;

31. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over and emphasises the need to maintain support for health systems to improve their resilience and bolster preparedness through the EU4Health programme; underlines, further, the key role that the programme plays in supporting the Beating Cancer Plan, the Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe and the newly created Health and Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority; reverses, therefore, the disproportionate and unjustified cut proposed by Council and reinforces the programme by EUR 25 million above the DB, including to support actions to achieve universal health coverage across the Union, encompassing quality access to sexual and reproductive health services;

32. Highlights the increasingly numerous and severe natural disasters in Europe, as evidenced most recently by the record wild fires in the summer of 2022; regrets that, owing to climate change, such extreme weather events resulting often in emergencies are going to intensify and multiply; decides, therefore and in line with the Commission President's pledge in her 2022 State of the Union address, to reinforce the Union Civil Protection Mechanism by EUR 20 million in order to enhance the Union's response capacity and better protect its citizens, including capacities for the mobilisation of medical units in emergencies, and underlines the need to invest in climate mitigation and adaptation for particularly vulnerable regions;

33. Recalls that the cultural and creative sectors, often small businesses, individual artists and nor for-profit community organisations, have been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related public health measures; emphasises the key role that Creative Europe plays in supporting European creations and Union values as well as the recovery of the cultural and creative sectors, fostering media literacy and combatting disinformation; decides, therefore, to increase the programme's 2023 appropriations by EUR 12 million above the DB;

34. Underlines the need to promote respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights; stresses the crucial role of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme in strengthening Union values, Union citizenship and democracy, equality and gender equality and the rule of law in the Union, and in supporting victims of gender-based violence; reverses, therefore, the Council's cuts to the programme; decides, further, to increase the Daphne strand by EUR 2 million above the DB to tackle gender-based violence, which has worsened since the pandemic, as well as all forms of violence perpetrated against refugees, children, young persons and other groups at risk, such as LGBTIQ+ persons and persons with disabilities, and the 'citizens' engagement and participation' strand by EUR 1,5 million above the DB, in particular to ensure proper follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe;

35. Is deeply concerned about the multiple reports highlighting the financing of associations with links to radical religious and political organisations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood; calls on the Commission to guarantee that Union funds finance only organisations that strictly respect all European values, including the freedom of thought, the freedom of speech and equality between men and women, in particular through the programme Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values; asks the Commission, therefore, to impose to the beneficiary organisations the signature of a Charter committing them to respect those values before making funds available;

36. Recalls the importance of supporting social dialogue and workers' training and ensuring stable funding; calls on the Commission to ensure good absorption of the related budgets;

37. Considers that there should be sufficient 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 of supporting the bicommunal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage;

38. Notes that many of the documents and communications of the Union's institutions, bodies and agencies are only available in English; notes also that working meetings are held without the possibility of interpretation; calls for the principles, rights and obligations laid down in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and Regulation No 1/1958 — as well as in internal guidelines and decisions, such as the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour — to be upheld; invites the Union's institutions, bodies and agencies, therefore, to provide the necessary human resources to ensure multilingualism, by increasing the number of staff responsible for translation and interpretation;

39. Underlines the importance of protecting the Union budget against fraud, corruption and other prohibited conduct, which adversely affect the Union and national budgets; stresses, in this regard, the central role that the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) plays in protecting the Union's financial interests, including with respect to the use of NGEU funds, and ensuring compliance with the rule of law; decides, therefore, to apply targeted reinforcements to the EPPO and increase its staffing levels to allow the body to fulfil its mandate, thereby reinforcing efforts against fraud, corruption, money laundering and organised crime; calls on all Member States to join the EPPO and ensure better protection of the Union financial interests; recalls the importance of compliance with the general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget;

40. Considers it necessary to ensure adequate and stable funding for institutional communication, to enable the Union to engage with citizens, including at local level, counter disinformation and facilitate citizen's participation in democratic life, which is even more urgent in the light of Russia's war against Ukraine; restores, therefore, the level of the DB on the relevant lines;

41. Reinforces Sub-heading 2b overall by EUR 272 821 707 above the DB in commitment appropriations (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed by using the available margin and mobilising the special instruments;

Heading 3 — Natural Resources and Environment

42. Expresses its grave concerns about the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine and its economic fallout as well as of the extreme weather events, including severe and prolonged droughts, on production and distribution in the agricultural sector and food markets; underlines the strategic role that agriculture plays in avoiding a food crisis by providing safe, high-quality food at affordable prices all over Europe; recalls that 2023 is the first year of the new common agricultural policy that will support Union farmers, who play a fundamental role in maintaining the economic resilience of rural areas, by easing the debt burden of young farmers and helping them with rising loan interest rates and higher input costs; believes that the crisis situation justifies the partial mobilisation of the new agricultural reserve by a minimum of EUR 10 million for young farmers; calls on the Commission to prepare pertinent exceptional measures in line with the relevant provisions in the basic act and to increase, as relevant, the amount to be mobilised;

43. Reiterates the importance of the LIFE programme in supporting climate action and environmental protection and its key role in designing exemplary intervention and catalysing measures towards climate mitigation and climate adaptation as well as towards halting biodiversity loss; calls for the level of budgetary support for LIFE to be increased across the various programme strands; highlights that any annual reinforcement for the LIFE programme will imply progress towards the mainstreaming targets and ambitions in the areas of climate and biodiversity; considers the present circumstances to justify a particular emphasis on the article covering the Clean Energy Transition;

44. Stresses the need to significantly increase the budget of the European Environment Agency to provide sufficient financial and staff resources to enable full implementation of the European Green Deal and its related policies as one of the main pillars for the transformation of the Union economy to a fair, inclusive, sustainable, resilient and carbon-neutral one; believes that the Commission should at all costs avoid putting at risk the implementation and enforcement of environmental policies and legislation;

45. Stresses the important role of the just transition plans and the need for their timely approval in the current economic and geopolitical situation to secure necessary investments and growth in the Union; emphasises the need to ensure the smooth implementation of the Just Transition Fund as an essential tool for increasing the Union's energy independence and innovative capacity and addressing socio-economic challenges and the energy transition in response to climate targets;

46. Reinforces Heading 3 by EUR 61 240 000 in commitment appropriations above the DB levels (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be financed using part of the available margin;

47. Recalls that, traditionally, an Amending Letter will still complete the picture regarding the availabilities for the EAGF and that the approach to amendments in Heading 3 can be adjusted accordingly in the course of the conciliation;

Heading 4 — Migration and Border Management

48. Notes that, in 2022, as a result of the war against Ukraine, it was necessary to provide additional financing of EUR 150 million to the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to support Member States receiving people fleeing the conflict; welcomes the decision to trigger the Temporary Protection Directive ([16]), which, owing to the nature of the conflict and the efforts of Member States to protect women and children from human trafficking, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, will entail a longer-term financial commitment and necessitate ongoing budgetary support to Member States; decides, therefore, to reinforce the AMIF by EUR 100 million above the DB in 2023;

([16]) Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12).

49. Recalls that, in 2022, it was also necessary to provide top-up funding to the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) to enable additional support to be provided to frontline Member States in the context of the war, as well as to support the further integration of Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia in the Schengen area; regrets, further, that the Commission has repeatedly proposed to erode the agreed financial envelope for the BMVI so as to find resources for justice and home affairs agencies with expanded mandates, including Europol in the DB; decides, on the basis of the above considerations, to increase the BMVI by EUR 25 million above the DB in 2023;

50. Recalls the vital role that the European Union Asylum Agency plays in supporting Member States with respect to asylum and international protection procedures and notes that the agency's workload has increased, both as a result of the war against Ukraine and owing to the new tasks entrusted to it under its enhanced mandate; decides, therefore, to increase the agency's staffing;

51. Highlights the need for a further increase in commitment appropriations and staff for eu-LISA in line with the agency's identified needs, thus enabling it to continue implementing a number of critical Union projects for internal security and border management in 2023;

52. Highlights the importance of an effective European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to assist Member States in managing the common external borders of the Union and to ensure integrated border management in full compliance with fundamental rights; notes that Frontex continues to have difficulty in absorbing the steep year-on-year increase in appropriations and recruiting the additional operational staff required; calls on the Commission to conduct an in-depth analysis of the matter to improve implementation under Parliament's scrutiny; decides therefore to support Council's proposed cut of EUR 50 million for Frontex in 2023; underlines nevertheless the need to ensure that Frontex has the necessary budgetary means to fulfil its mandate and obligations;

53. Reinforces Heading 4 overall by EUR 130 430 664 above the Council position and EUR 80 430 664 above the DB, to be financed by using part of the available margin;

Heading 5 — Security and Defence

54. Underlines the importance of enhancing European cooperation in defence matters taking into account the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the highly unstable international environment; considers that such cooperation not only makes Europe and its citizens safer but also leads to greater efficiency and potential savings; calls in that connection for increased funding for the capability development strand of the European Defence Fund in order to foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base that will contribute to the strategic autonomy of the Union;

55. Proposes also to increase 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; notes that military mobility could also be boosted by the urgent accession to the Schengen Area of Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia; recalls that the failure to resolve that matter has a detrimental economic and geostrategic impact; underlines, the need to restore the level of the DB of the Internal Security Fund to ensure sufficient funding for the fight against serious and organised crime with a cross-border dimension and cybercrime;

56. Reinforces Heading 5 overall by EUR 81 192 700 above the DB, to be financed using the available margin and mobilising special instruments;

Heading 6 — Neighbourhood and the World

57. Notes with deep concern that the Russian aggression against Ukraine and its worldwide effects have dramatically increased humanitarian assistance needs, which were already under pressure because of funding gaps and the multiplication of crises and conflicts in the world; asks to significantly increase humanitarian aid to address the unprecedented gap between needs and available resources; deplores the fact that Heading 6 has no margin and is therefore not fit for the current situation or for tackling possible new emergencies; considers that the Heading 6 ceiling should be increased as

a matter of urgency; regrets that the DB is not able to at least sustain the current level of response while humanitarian needs and emergencies are steeply increasing around the globe, notably worsening food insecurity on account of the impact of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, intensifying the impacts of climate change and increasingly severe climate-induced disasters and newly emerging conflicts; is deeply concerned that, even with the increases proposed by Parliament, there would be insufficient resources to address the humanitarian aid needs in 2023;

58. Calls for continued and substantial support for the Eastern Neighbourhood, especially for countries helping refugees that are fleeing Ukraine and facing inflation and high energy and food prices; considers it necessary to support political, economic and social reforms and civil society actors, in particular human rights and democracy activists, civil society organisations defending women's rights and the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community or providing assistance to persecuted persons and political prisoners, together with Ukrainian and Moldovan organisations which have been forced to restructure their activities as a result of Russia's war of aggression, organisations contributing to the fight against corruption, and independent media which help expose disinformation and propaganda;

59. Asks for additional resources to be allocated to the Southern Neighbourhood in order to support political, economic and social reforms; welcomes the recent announcement of the Union's continued commitment to multiannual funding to UNRWA; underlines that the increase in appropriations for the Southern Neighbourhood is notably intended to provide predictable funding for UNRWA, in the light of the crucial role it plays in protecting and ensuring the essential needs of Palestinian refugees as well as contributing to their human development;

60. Reinforces thematic programmes and rapid response actions of the NDICI-Global Europe (NDICI-GE), in particular through the 'People' programme, to address the consequences of the war in Ukraine, develop more robust health systems and close access gaps to essential health services as well as to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation measures through the 'Planet' programme, and through the use of the Resilience line to foster synergies between humanitarian, development, public investments and peace actions, especially in countries that are candidates for accession but do not benefit yet from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA);

61. Emphasises the need to increase funding for Western Balkan countries in the framework of the IPA to support economic growth and employment and also as a geopolitical priority, especially in the context of Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, which resonated strongly across the region, but insists on the conditionality requirements regarding rule of law for every euro committed in the 2023 budget; in this context, calls on the Commission to use a share of the additional funding for the Erasmus+ programming for increased funding to institutions of higher education for the purpose of a new scholarship programme for students from Western Balkan countries;

62. Calls for Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova to be included as soon as possible within the scope of the IPA and for the financial envelope of the programme to be increased accordingly; considers that it is necessary to provide support to Ukraine and Moldova, as new Union candidate countries, and to Georgia, as an aspiring applicant, on their path to Union membership; calls for the provision of further financial assistance under IPA III in order to promote the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme;

63. Decides to increase support for strategic communication, especially to measures aimed at countering global disinformation through the systematic tracking and exposing of disinformation spread by state and other actors;

64. Underlines the key role of the EU Macro-Financial Assistance to Moldova, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Ukraine to promote investments, support recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and the consequences of the war;

65. Reinforces Heading 6 overall by EUR 465 000 000 above the DB, to be financed by mobilisation of special instruments;

Heading 7 — European Public Administration

66. Considers that the Council's cuts in this heading — which are designed to obviate recourse to the Flexibility Instrument, as proposed in the DB — are unjustified and would not allow the Commission to fulfil its tasks; restores therefore the DB for the Commission administrative expenditure, including with respect to its Offices;

67. Highlights the risks to the internal security of the Union stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine; in that context, welcomes the launch of the Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova and calls on the Commission to facilitate and accelerate the full operability of the Hub by providing logistical and financial support through cooperation with DG Home and DG Just, as well as with Union's experts from relevant Union's JHA agencies deployed in Moldova;

68. Emphasises the importance of ensuring that the Commission has sufficient staff to fulfil its tasks, including those relating to new initiatives and newly adopted legislation; calls, therefore, on the Commission to ensure that it has the additional staff necessary for efficient and effective implementation; highlights in that context the impact of the legislative proposals under the European Green Deal, the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act, and increased Union spending owing to NGEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, on staff needs in certain services, in particular the Commission's Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV), the Directorate-General for Competition (DG COMP), the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF); expresses concern that the Commission does not have the staff necessary for the work required; asks the Commission to take account of those staff needs, without undermining staff levels in other parts of the institution;

69. Calls for the swift adoption of the targeted revision of the Financial Regulation proposed by the Commission in relation to the handling of default interest for the late repayment of cancelled or reduced competition fines, so as to avoid pressure on spending under Heading 7;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

70. 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; adopts, following 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, 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

71. Underlines the need to provide a sufficient level of payment appropriations in the 2023 budget and decides, as a general rule, to reverse Council's cuts and to reinforce payment appropriations on those lines which are amended in commitment appropriations; emphasises that it is necessary to accelerate programme implementation to avoid a backlog of payments in the second half of the MFF period;

Other Sections

Section I — European Parliament

72. Maintains unchanged the overall level of its budget for 2023 set at EUR 2 268 777 642, in line with its estimates of revenue and expenditure adopted by the Plenary on 7 April 2022 and updated on 3 May 2022 at the request of the Commission due to a change in the estimated indexation rate; decides to include artificially and in a budgetary neutral way 98 posts in its establishment chart for one year only in order to allow for the integration of the laureates of an internal competition in the light of the application of Article 29(4) of the Staff Regulations, similarly to what has been done in the 2020 budget; updates the remarks of five budgetary lines, also to add the possibility to reimburse the costs of participation of petitioners, including travel, subsistence and incidental expenses, during the official missions of the Committee on Petitions outside of Parliament's premises;

73. Acknowledges the important role that the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (EPP/Fs) plays for the transparency, sound financial management and diversity of the political system by ensuring the application of common rules by the EPP/Fs; notes that, while its budget is included under Section I — European Parliament, the Authority is an independent Union body; decides therefore to create a separate item for the remunerations and allowances of the staff working for the Authority and a separate line in the establishment chart of the Parliament covering its posts, without additional appropriations to the DB;

74. Asks the Bureau to provide sufficient means to Article 3 2 3 — Support for democracy and capacity-building for the parliaments of third countries in order for the Parliament to contribute efficiently to the organisation of the third edition of the high-level conference of the Global Campus of Human Rights, if needed and possible, including by way of a transfer request from Parliament's administration during the budget execution year;

75. In line with its above-mentioned resolution of 7 April 2022 on its estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2023 and taking into account the answers provided by the Secretary-General on 20 July 2022:

(a) recalls that weaknesses in the fight against cyber and hybrid security in one institution can impact all; reiterates therefore the importance of Parliament's budget to be adequately equipped to strengthen its capabilities against cyber and hybrid threats for the benefit of all institutions, especially in light of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the increasing amount of attacks in recent years and the upcoming 2024 European elections;

(b) takes note of the ongoing measures taken by the administration to counter disinformation or any actions aimed at misrepresenting positions of Members, in particular in view of the 2024 European elections; reiterates its calls for enhanced cooperation between all the players involved at inter-institutional level;

(c) notes the support given to the Democracy Support and Coordination Group and its Lead Members in carrying out democracy support activities; welcomes the enhanced activities and calls for continuing support on communication with the citizens by providing information also in the languages of linguistic minorities, regions and communities where appropriate and fighting disinformation with special emphasis on the new priority countries;

(d) reiterates, in the context of the ongoing revision of the general implementing provisions concerning the reimbursement of mission and duty travel expenses and the internal rules governing missions and duty travel by officials and other servants of the European Parliament, the will of the Plenary expressed on several occasions, namely that the Bureau should ensure that accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs) receive the same allowances for the missions that they carry out between Parliament's three places of work as for civil servants and other agents;

(e) calls on the Conference of Presidents and the Bureau, once again, to revise the implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the Union and the decision on 'Committee missions outside the three places of work'; underlines that such a revision should consider the possibility for APAs, subject to certain conditions, to accompany Members on official Parliament delegations and missions, striking the right balance between the high added value for Members and the environmental and logistical and budgetary constraints;

(f) 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; while recognising the importance of the establishment of Europa Experiences in all Member States as a way to bring the Union closer to the people, requests an update of the running costs of the Europa Experience centres, given the context of high inflation; requests also an update on the EUR 37,9 million loan proposed to finance the purchase of the building of the Europa Experience in Dublin as required by Article 266(6) of the Financial Regulation;

(g) recalls the importance of a transparent and fair decision-making process in the field of building policy, having due regard to Article 266 of the Financial Regulation, in relation to Parliament's building policy;

(h) reminds the Bureau that proper information and consultation with the Committee on Budgets before adopting any major decision on building related issues is needed due to their important budgetary implications; asks the Bureau to explore savings opportunities and totally reconsider the project on the future of the Spaak building in Brussels;

(i) considers that in times where Union citizens face dramatic rises on their daily cost of living, Union institutions without exception should demonstrate solidarity and lead by example, notably in relation to reducing energy consumption; notes that inflation and increasing energy prices have put immense pressure on Parliament's budget; takes note of the Bureau decisions on 2 May 2022 and 3 October 2022 on short-term measures aiming at lowering Parliaments' energy consumption; asks that users be able to fine-tune the temperature in the offices and meeting rooms themselves while remaining in the agreed frame to perform savings; calls on Parliament to take all the necessary steps to decrease medium and long-term energy consumption in order to reduce the energy bills in the upcoming revision of the current approach on energy saving activities; given the energy crisis and geopolitical context, welcomes and encourages the investments in renewable energy and for phasing-out of fossil fuels and in particular the installation of heat pumps; calls to upscale on sight energy production, in particular by installing of state of the art rooftop photovoltaics for the maximum potential in Brussels and Strasbourg as soon as possible, and welcomes the new study on the more cost efficient photovoltaic panels which is currently underway; welcomes the building energy management system established in EMAS and calls for the yearly audit to be part of the draft estimates presented by the services; requests the Bureau to trigger the launch of an exchange of good practices between governing bodies of Union institutions in revising their multi annual spending strategies in order to find ways to make further savings; encourages further exchange of views on best practices of energy consumption policies beyond the Union institutions, for example with local authorities;

(j) welcomes the preliminary steps taken towards formulating a carbon neutrality target; reminds and calls on Members and political groups to contribute to the ongoing reduction of trunk shipping between Brussels and Strasbourg at plenary sessions, as committed to by the Bureau; calls for the relevant investments to be planned in the forthcoming budgets on the recovery and reuse of rainwater and a more rational use of water;

76. Calls on the Parliament to continue conducting regular assessments of the organisation of its personnel needs, to reallocate posts between directorates in accordance with evolving priorities in order to carry out new tasks as much as possible at constant staffing levels and to assess the risks related to employing growing numbers of contract agents, including the danger of creating a two-tier staffing structure within Parliament; considering Parliament's legal obligations, underlines that reprioritisation of resources becomes increasingly important in an inflationary environment;

Other Sections (Sections IV-X)

77. Stresses the pressure that the high inflationary context has on expenditure for the other institutions; highlights that the largest parts of their budgets are fixed by statutory or contractual obligations impacted by inflation and that they have no control over inflation rates and increasing energy prices; points out the need for the institutions to have sufficient staff in order to fulfil their mandate; welcomes the continuous efforts made by the institutions to redeploy staff and find additional efficiency gains but recognises the limits of this approach in the current context when paired simultaneously with increasing responsibilities; regrets that the Commission did not grant any of the additional posts requested by the other institutions, irrespective of their new tasks; condemns the horizontal approach taken by the Council to increase the abatement rate by 1,8 percentage points in each institution and considers that it is not justified; recalls that increasing the abatement rate would oblige the other institutions to keep a higher number of posts vacant, hence decreasing their workforce, their capabilities to answer to citizens' concerns and fulfil their mandate;

78. Decides therefore to restore the level of the DB for the European Committee of the Regions; in line with the gentlemen's agreement, does not modify the Council's reading concerning the Council and the European Council;

79. Increases, for the following duly justified cases, the level of appropriations or staff above the DB in order to give the institutions enough resources to perform adequately, efficiently and effectively the growing number of tasks from their mandate and be equipped for the upcoming challenges, in particular as regards cybersecurity; underlines in that respect that the Union is not prepared enough to fight cyber threats that are, over the years, increasing in frequency and complexity; believes that appropriate means and staff should be granted to all Union institutions in order to tackle those threats both internally and in the context of inter-institutional cooperation; proposes therefore to:

(a) restore the level of appropriations in line with the estimates of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Ombudsman, by increasing the level of appropriations above the DB for budgetary lines that cover appropriations in relation to the new staff, as well as the number of posts in their establishment plans;

(b) restore the level of appropriations partially in line with the estimates of the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the European External Action Service by increasing the appropriations above the DB for budgetary lines that cover appropriations in relation to the new staff as well as the number of posts in their establishment plans;

(c) reinforce several operational lines, in line with the European Data Protection Supervisor's request, in order for the 2023 budget to reflect the unexpected high costs of living that were not taken in account when preparing their estimates.

Assessment of the Amending Letter

80. Takes note of the fact that Amending Letter No 1 to the draft general budget 2023, which has an overall net impact on expenditure of an additional EUR 758,3 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 2 394,9 million in payment appropriations, including a very significant increase in payment appropriations as a consequence of FAST-CARE; also takes note of the fact that, overall, the Commission proposes to mobilise the Flexibility Instrument for an amount of EUR 822,1 million for headings 2b, 5 and 6;

81. Notes that the Amending Letter includes only some of Parliament's concerns and priorities as set out in this resolution, such as the reinforcements for humanitarian aid, the UCPM and Erasmus+ and greater support for defence; expresses nonetheless concern that the reinforcements proposed are insufficient and some of the reinforcements proposed are frontloading rather than additional appropriations;

82. Notes the measures and actions taken to support Ukraine so far since the beginning of the war, and encourages the Commission to propose further measures; regrets that the Commission's budgetary proposals for 2023 do not provide an appropriate response to the broad consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; believes that the needs for 2023 are much higher than what is proposed in the Amending Letter;

83. Notes the proposal to mobilise the Single Margin Instrument for an amount of EUR 450 million to cover the financing costs of EURI; highlights the fact that the actual amounts required for EURI financing costs in any given annual budget depend on the interest rates on borrowings which introduces a significant level of uncertainty into the annual budget negotiations; stresses that those costs should never come at the expense of funding for programmes; emphasises that using the SMI for EURI financing costs also curtails the budget's already very limited flexibility and narrow margins and therefore ability to respond to current and emerging needs; recalls the urgency to substantially revise the MFF and the Parliament's demands to place the EURI over and above the MFF ceilings;

84. Notes the adjusted level of appropriations for the Other sections taking into account the current estimate of the salary adjustment for 2022 that is lower than forecast in the DB 2023 and the transfer of appropriations from the Other institutions to CERT-EU in order to enhance the Union's cyber security capabilities, reducing therefore the level of Other institutions' level of appropriations by EUR 45 million;

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85. 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.