



2021/0227(BUD)

28.9.2021

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022
(2021/0227(BUD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Urmas Paet

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that due to delays in the adoption of most of the basic acts under Heading 6, 2022 will be the first full year of operation for most Union external financing instruments;
2. Acknowledges the increase in payment appropriations in Heading 6 due to the beginning of implementation period of the financing instruments and launching of new programmes under that Heading;
3. Emphasises that at a time when external challenges and matters of international politics are gaining importance, it must be ensured that the external dimension of the Union budget is appropriately funded and prepared to respond without delay to current, emerging as well as future challenges; insists that the budget for the external action should focus on priority areas, both geographically and thematically, and on areas where Union action can bring most added value;
4. Notes that the majority of external action spending is concentrated under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) and insists on supporting agreed priorities under those external financing instruments, including those decided during the NDICI-Global Europe high-level geopolitical dialogue; reiterates its previous demand for a differentiated budget nomenclature for the new external financing instruments; stresses that in the context of a more streamlined set of instruments, the budget structure needs to be sufficiently detailed to allow Parliament to carry out its budgetary functions effectively and fulfil its oversight role;
5. Stresses the urgent need to substantially increase NDICI-Global Europe funds available for the thematic programme on peace, stability and conflict prevention and rapid response as well as human rights and democracy and welcomes the increased contribution from NDICI-Global Europe and IPA III to Erasmus+, enabling increased mobility of students from the pre-accession countries;
6. Emphasises the need to increase funding for Western Balkan countries and the countries of the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood to support comprehensive political and socio-economic reforms and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and its long-term economic consequences, but also to support areas such as media freedom, the fight against corruption and organised crime, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups, as well as empowerment and protection of women, girls and LGBTIQI persons;
7. Points to the numerous challenges in the Union's neighbouring regions to the East and South and emphasises the need to ensure adequate funding for crucial areas such as supporting democracy, civil society and the rule of law; calls in particular for continued support to Belarusian human rights and democracy activists;
8. Reiterates its firm belief that in countries of specific strategic interest for the Union,

particularly the accession countries and the associated countries of the Eastern Partnership, as well as the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, a closer link between the European Parliament and the respective national parliaments should be established, and therefore calls for adequate funding to ensure the required level of parliamentary cooperation;

9. Believes that to ensure cross-cutting implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, the Union and its bodies should mainstream YPS in policymaking, programming, funding, and monitoring; calls for the creation and opening up of existing dedicated funding instruments for YPS initiatives that are flexible and accessible to all youth, including those who face multiple forms of marginalisation;
10. Considers that the human rights situation in Egypt requires a revision of the Commission's budget support operations and requires the prioritisation of Union aid to primarily supporting democratic actors and civil society; calls for more transparency on all forms of financial support or training provided by the Union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank to Egypt;
11. Welcomes stronger conditionality related to democracy, human rights and rule of law under the modernised IPA III; calls on dedicated budget lines for the Western Balkan countries and Turkey under IPA III, which should provide sufficient funding for Turkish civil society and people-to-people contacts; underlines that misuse of Union funds by any government must be prevented; calls in the case of Turkey for continuing the management of IPA III funds by the Commission or by international organisations and allowing indirect management with the beneficiary country only where strictly necessary; reminds that all the funding under IPA III, including the Economic and Investment Plan for Western Balkans needs to be in line with the targets of the Paris Agreement and Union decarbonisation goals;
12. Highlights the Union's global support efforts for refugees and recalls the important role played by Turkey in welcoming refugees from Syria; reaffirms that the Union and its Member States must continue to provide effective and monitored aid to Syrian refugees in Turkey, ensuring that its funds are directly and in full transparency channelled to non-governmental organisations; reiterates that any successor to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRT) should not be financed to the detriment of the newly adopted financing instruments such as IPA III and NDICI-Global Europe (including the cushion); requests that any successor of the FRT should be financed by fresh appropriations and by contribution from the Member States and insists on full involvement of the Parliament in decisions, including decisions concerning contributions to the Union trust funds from the Union budget and concerning the establishment of any FRT successor, in full respect of the role of the budgetary authority; calls, furthermore, for a fully-fledged human rights impact assessment of the EU-Turkey Statement and underlines the importance of both parties' compliance with fundamental rights as part of its implementation;
13. Insists that the room for external action expenditure given by the multiannual financial framework (MFF) ceiling for Heading 6 'Neighbourhood and the world' and the rules for the mobilisation of the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve must be fully utilised; reiterates that the balance between the resources assigned to the different external action

instruments through the respective regulations must be preserved; emphasises that the future funding for the needs of the Syrian refugees was not factored in the MFF or NDICI-Global Europe discussion and it should therefore not be borne by the programmed instruments; furthermore, as the expected Syrian refugees package is not responding to a new crisis or unforeseen needs, stresses that any funding from the emergency cushion of NDICI-Global Europe towards this should be limited; calls instead on Member States to make available additional "fresh funds" for this package; recalls that any flexible funding mechanism established in the framework of the NDICI-Global Europe must comply with the thematic spending targets defined in the Regulation;

14. Recognizes the essential role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a unique provider of vital services for millions of Palestine refugees in the Middle East and calls for an increase in the Union financial contribution to UNRWA as an investment towards security, stability and development in the region and beyond; takes good note of the recent findings of the Union-funded external study of Palestinian textbooks, which points to a limited number of areas requiring improvement and largely disproves allegations of widespread incitement to hatred and violence, therefore confirming that these textbooks adhere to UNESCO standards; takes good note of the Commission's vigilance on this matter and welcomes the Commission's firm commitment to fighting antisemitism; calls on the Commission to continue engaging with the Palestinian Authority and the UNRWA to promote quality education for Palestinian children and to continue ensuring full adherence to UNESCO standards; furthermore, calls on the Commission to ensure that its funding to the Palestinian Authority counters the negative trends and growing inter-Palestinian division, contributes to promoting pluralism and accountability and supports Palestinian civil society;
15. Stresses that the humanitarian aid budget for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries should be strongly increased to support and protect vulnerable Afghans and their families, including internally displaced people and refugees, and to enhance resettlement; reiterates in this respect the need to ensure humane and adequate support both for the people seeking shelter, as well as the host countries; demands that, unless the respect for human rights and especially the rights of women and girls can be guaranteed, development assistance to the Afghan regime remains suspended and is redirected towards independent development and humanitarian organisations in line with the Union external action objectives; insists, furthermore that all funding for the civil society organisations in Afghanistan will be allocated directly to these organisations without using the Taliban government as an intermediary; underlines the need to draw the necessary lessons from the international engagement to fight terrorism and advance freedom, human rights and civil liberties in Afghanistan;
16. Calls for a more ambitious budget in the human rights and the support to civil society organisations including the ones committed to women and girls empowerment; recalls the need to implement strict conditionality in regard to financial support for Union's partner countries and neighbourhood in cases of human rights violations; calls in this context also for greater transparency regarding human rights-related provisions in financing agreements and a clarification of the mechanism and criteria for the suspension of such agreements in the event of a breach of human rights, democratic

principles and the rule of law and in serious cases of corruption; highlights, furthermore, that the Union should strictly refrain from budget support as a modality to provide assistance in countries that grossly fail to meet international standards in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law or that fail to demonstrate their commitment to fighting corruption; in this respect, encourages a thorough application of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act) and extension of its scope to acts of corruption;

17. Emphasises that the protection and promotion of human rights and democracy globally continues to be of core interest for external actions of the Union; calls for increased funding for electoral observation missions, including local observers, given their role in consolidating democratic institutions and bringing stability in fragile countries notably by local civil society groups;
18. Stresses the need to improve the visibility and communication concerning Union aid and Union financing in third countries, particularly candidate and partner countries; calls upon the Commission to put greater focus on dissemination of the successfully implemented projects, and their positive impact and benefits in order to strengthen the impact of funding and enhance Union public diplomacy and to take particular care to assess and prevent any violation linked to the Union's own projects and funding in third countries;
19. While condemning any attack against religious minorities, in particular Christians, around the world, emphasises that adequate funding for actions to protect persecuted minorities must be available, and in this regard further underlines its support for the office of the Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside European Union;
20. Highlights the importance of building a strong Union common security and defence policy (CSDP) and enhancing cooperation in defence and security matters through various instruments such as permanent structured cooperation, Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, and the European Defence Fund, a key contributor to the Union's strategic autonomy, technological sovereignty and its ability to decide and act autonomously if needed; expects that the upcoming Union Strategic Compass, and its resulting conclusions, will also result in further increases of spending on defence related initiatives in order to respond to the multiple ongoing challenges and lead to a more geostrategic Union that is able to defend its interests and values and take over more responsibilities in security and defence, in partnership with the United States and NATO, in particular in the Union neighbourhood; stresses the importance of civilian CSDP missions and calls on the Member States to commit sufficient personnel within short time frames;
21. Underlines the importance of evaluating regularly all Union security assistance measures (civilian CSDP and Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace/NDICI-Global Europe) and of readjusting certain missions, operations, and measures with a view to incorporating a meaningful human security approach, which takes into account the real security needs of local populations;
22. Stresses the importance of the protection of the Union against foreign malicious

interference and influence, notably through hybrid attacks and disinformation; calls for ensuring appropriate funding and mandates for the European External Action Service (EEAS) units and projects dealing with those issues and emphasises the relevance of coordination among Union institutions; calls for a creation of dedicated teams to tackle threats coming from particular regions; recalls that the European Court of Auditors concluded that the EEAS needs a broader mandate to tackle the surge in hybrid attacks in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and new emerging threats, accompanied with sufficient funding;

23. Repeats its previous statements about the threats related to cyber security as well as the spreading of fake news, in this context highlights the need for the Union budget to better address and respond to those key challenges on a horizontal level, including in particular at the headquarters of the Union as well as its delegations around the world;
24. Emphasises that optic fibre cables are the central nervous system of the global internet, as 97% of all internet traffic travels through those cables; underlines that although those cables are a central and indispensable part of the critical infrastructure of the Union and thus of great geopolitical importance, they have recently been the subject of foreign spying operations; believes that the Union should prioritize the security and protection of those cables; calls for the Union to set up a Union optic fibre cables security programme, that includes research, coordination, policy-making, the tracking of incidents and the training of coast guards;
25. Stresses the continuous ripple effect of COVID-19 globally; calls for a coordinated and coherent response within the Union and its partner countries when providing medical help and better capacity building with vaccine distribution and sharing, including through COVAX, as well as support for countries' social and economic recovery;
26. Stresses the need for sufficient funding to facilitate the planning and implementation of the Union's global connectivity agenda; emphasises the importance of including concrete connectivity projects and investments in the programming process for the 2021-2027 MFF;
27. Underlines the importance of connecting the common foreign and security policy to the EU Arctic Policy and stresses the responsibility of the Union to support the protection of the Arctic and its local communities;
28. Notes that NDICI-Global Europe foresees mid-term and final evaluations and the detailed annual reporting by Commission to Parliament and Council on the ongoing activities, results delivered, effectiveness, as well as progress towards the thematic targets and objectives of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹; calls on the Commission to develop and implement a precise methodology for tracking the thematic targets, in particular on climate, biodiversity, gender equality, as well as migration and forced displacement, to ensure transparency, proper accountability and enable the Parliament to effectively fulfil its scrutiny role as an arm

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009 (OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1).

of the budgetary authority;

29. Welcomes an ambitious external Gender Action Plan (GAP) III; calls for adequate financial resources for its implementation and stresses the need for proper and measurable indicators and a specific methodology, as well as regular monitoring, to analyse the impact of the Union budget on gender equality and effectively implement gender budgeting in Union external action;
30. Calls on the Bureau to draw up a translation of key foreign policy resolutions adopted under Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (own-initiative reports) into the non-Union official languages of the United Nations (namely Arabic, Chinese and Russian), as well as country-specific resolutions adopted under Rule 132 of the Rules of Procedure (resolution accompanying the statements by the Commission or High Representative or Vice-President) and Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure (urgency resolution) into the official language of the country concerned, with a view to enhancing the impact and outreach of the Parliament's foreign affairs activities, and calls on the budgetary authority to ensure that sufficient appropriations are made available for that purpose;
31. Acknowledges the need to reinforce the EEAS in order to allow it to fulfil its functions under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime; calls for adequate funding for additional staff in order to ensure carrying out the tasks under this new Union foreign policy tool, and urges the EEAS to adopt and implement without further delay its self-standing implementation provisions on outside activities and assignments, which create a *sui generis* legal basis for Heads of Delegations to better protect the image and reputation of the Union as a whole, as announced in the written answers provided to the Committee on Budgetary Control in the context of the 2019 discharge procedure;
32. Rejects the Council's cuts to the administrative budget of EEAS; calls on the Rapporteur for the Committee on Budgets for section X to restore the draft budget on all lines cut by the Council in section X.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	27.9.2021
Result of final vote	+: 50 -: 8 0: 8
Members present for the final vote	Alviina Alametsä, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Anna Bonfrisco, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Susanna Ceccardi, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Katalin Cseh, Tanja Fajon, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Kinga Gál, Sunčana Glavak, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Sandra Kalniete, Maximilian Krah, Andrius Kubilius, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Claudiu Manda, Lukas Mandl, Thierry Mariani, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Sven Mikser, Francisco José Millán Mon, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Manu Pineda, Thijs Reuten, Jérôme Riviére, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Andreas Schieder, Radosław Sikorski, Jordi Solé, Sergei Stanishev, Tineke Strik, Hermann Tertsch, Hilde Vautmans, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou, Željana Zovko
Substitutes present for the final vote	Vladimír Bilčík, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Özlem Demirel, Angel Dzhambazki, Markéta Gregorová, Evin Incir, Assita Kanko, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Mick Wallace

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

50	+
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo
PPE	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Traian Băsescu, Vladimír Bilčík, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Michael Gahler, Sunčana Glavak, Sandra Kálniete, Andrius Kubilius, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Antonio López-Istúriz White, David McAllister, Lukas Mandl, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Radosław Sikorski, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Željana Zovko
Renew	Petras Auštrevičius, Katalin Cseh, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Nathalie Loiseau, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Hilde Vautmans
S&D	Maria Arena, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Tanja Fajon, Raphaël Glucksmann, Evin Incir, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Claudiu Manda, Sven Mikser, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Thijs Reuten, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Andreas Schieder, Sergei Stanishev
Verts/ALE	Alviina Alametsä, Markéta Gregorová, Jordi Solé, Tineke Strik, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Salima Yenbou

8	-
ID	Maximilian Krah, Thierry Mariani, Jérôme Riviére
NI	Kostas Papadakis
The Left	Özlem Demirel, Manu Pineda, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, Mick Wallace

8	0
ECR	Angel Dzhambazki, Anna Fotyga, Assita Kanko, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Hermann Tertsch
ID	Anna Bonfrisco, Susanna Ceccardi
NI	Kinga Gál

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention