2014 general budget: all sections

2013/2145(BUD) - 20/11/2013 - Budgetary joint text approved by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted by 494 votes to 158, with 13 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the joint text on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 approved by the Conciliation Committee under the budgetary procedure.

Parliament approved the joint text agreed by the Conciliation Committee.

Plenary also confirmed the joint statements by Parliament, the Council and the Commission included in the joint conclusions agreed by the Conciliation Committee annexed to this resolution.

The main issues of the draft text may be summarised as follows:

For the 2014 budget: the two institutions agreed on:

- **EUR 135.50 billion for overall payment appropriations;**
- **EUR 142.64 billion for commitment appropriations**.

This is a decrease of 6.5% for payments and of 6.2% for commitments compared to the EU budget for 2013.

The joint text also concerned the conclusion of Amending Budgets 8/2013 and 9/2013.

Horizontal issues: the joint text sets out:

- the number of posts and the contribution of the EU budget for the decentralised agencies (Frontex, Asylum Support Office and Europol) and a numer of joint initiatives;
- a comprehensive package of pilot projects and preparatory actions for an amount of EUR 79.4 million in commitment appropriations.

Expenditure headings of the financial framework: the joint text includes a series of budget lines that have been amended. These include, *inter alia*:

- Heading 1a: the creation of budget lines to fund information, consultation and participation of representatives undertakings, industrial relations and social dialogue; funding for special events such as Special Olympics Summer Games to be held in Antwerp (BE);
- Heading 1b: assigning EUR 134.9 million in commitments to the European Aid to the Most Deprived and mobilise EUR 89.3 million from the flexibility instrument to provide additional assistance to Cyprus.
- Heading 2: the EU participation at the World Exposition 2015 for which an additional amount of EUR 1 million in commitments is agreed.
- Heading 3: strengthening the "Europe for Citizens" programme, the MEDIA sub-programme and specific multimedia actions for a total amount of EUR 11 million in commitments.
- Heading 4: clarification of the budget nomenclature to better identify third countries eligible for EU financial assistance and strengthen the budget line supporting peace process and financial assistance to Palestine up to EUR 50 million.
- Heading 5: modification of appropriations and/or posts assigned to certain EU institutions. The establishment plans of the EU institutions and bodies have also been amended to take account of the creation, in the Staff Regulations, of a new functions group AST/SC.

Payment appropriations : a series of new amounts were provided in particular:

- EUR 150 million for the EU Solidarity Fund;
- EUR 200 million to support the Middle East peace process.

There was also the creation of a series of new budget lines as well as the setting aside of EUR 2 million for the EMU communication.

Joint statements: striving to keep the level of next year's EU budget in line with Member States' financing capacities, the Conciliation Committee made the following **joint statements**:

- *Payment appropriations*: the European Parliament and the Council recalled the need to ensure an orderly progression of payments so as to **avoid any abnormal shift of outstanding commitments ('RAL') onto the 2015 budget**. In this respect, they will have recourse, when appropriate, to the various **flexibility mechanisms** included in the MFF Regulation.

As regards the payment appropriations, they asked the Commission to **initiate any necessary action**, on the basis of the provisions of the draft MFF Regulation and the Financial Regulation, to cover the responsibility assigned by the Treaty and with particular reference to any expected under-implementation of appropriations to request additional payment appropriations in an amending budget if the appropriations entered in the 2014 budget are insufficient to cover expenditure.

The European Parliament and the Council should take position on any draft amending budget as quickly as possible in order to **avoid any shortfall in payment appropriations**. In addition, the European Parliament and the Council should undertake to process swiftly any possible transfer of payment appropriations, including across financial framework headings, in order to make the best possible use of payment appropriations entered in the budget and align them to actual execution and needs.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission will, throughout the year, actively monitor the state of implementation of the 2014 budget, in particular under sub-heading 1b (Economic, social and territorial cohesion) and rural development under heading 2 (Sustainable Growth: Natural Resources). This will take the form of **dedicated inter-institutional meetings** to take stock of payment implementation and revised forecasts.

- *Decentralised agencies*: the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission recalled the importance to **progressively reduce the staffing levels of all EU institutions**, bodies and agencies **by 5% over five years.**

They also agreed on the need for a **closer and more permanent scrutiny** on the development of decentralised agencies to ensure a coherent approach. They agreed to establish a specific inter-institutional working group with the aim of defining a clear development path for agencies, based on objective criteria.

- *Heading 5 and salary adjustments*: they agreed that the appropriations related to the proposed salary adjustments of 1.7% for 2011 and 1.7% for 2012 will not be included at this stage in the 2014 budget.

- *EU Special Representatives*: the Parliament and the Council agreed to examine the transfer of appropriations for the European Union Special Representatives from the Commission's budget (Section III) to the budget of the European External Action Service (Section X) in the context of the 2015 budgetary procedure.

The Agreement also includes draft amending budget No. 9 for 2013, which would mobilise the EU Solidarity Fund to provide financial assistance of EUR 400.5 million to repair damages caused in 2013 by

floods in Germany (360.5 million), Austria (21.7 million) and the Czech Republic (15.9 million) and drought in Romania (2.5 million).

Members called on the Parliament to approve the joint text agreed by the Conciliation Committee and to confirm the joint statements by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission included in the joint conclusions agreed by the Conciliation Committee.