Amending budget 1/2016: emergency support within the Union; European Police Office (Europol)

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The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by José Manuel FERNANDES (EPP, PT) the Council position on Draft amending budget No 1/2016 of the European Union for the financial year 2016, new instrument to provide emergency support within the Union.

Members recalled that the massive influx of refugees and migrants into Europe has created an exceptional situation whereby a large number of persons require urgent humanitarian assistance within the Union. This emergency situation has overstretched the response capacity of the Member States most affected and no appropriate instrument was available at Union level to address humanitarian needs. Accordingly, the Commission presented on 2 March 2016 a proposal for a Council Regulation aimed at filling a gap in the available instruments in order to address humanitarian needs within the territory of the Union. It subsequently proposed a Draft amending budget aimed at **creating the budget structure for that instrument** and at making available, from redeployment within the heading 3 of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), **EUR 100 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 80.2 million in payment appropriations** for immediate funding needs.

The Commission also proposed to reinforce the staffing levels of the European Counter-Terrorism Centre in EUROPOL and to provide the corresponding commitment and payment appropriations for an amount of EUR 2.0 million to be redeployed from the Internal Security Fund.

In this context, Members welcomed the proposal by the Commission and pointed to the deteriorating situation of migrants and asylum seekers. They stressed the **need to show solidarity with the Member States facing such an emergency situation** on their territory.

Members noted that, following the setting-up of two Trust Funds and of a Facility for Refugees in Turkey, **a new ad hoc mechanism has been put in place without an overall strategy to address the refugee crisis.**

They pointed to the problem that the new instrument is not founded on a Commission proposal for a regulation under the ordinary legislative procedure, and considered that **a more sustainable legal and budgetary framework** should be envisaged in order to allow for **humanitarian aid within the Union to be mobilised in the future**, when circumstances so require (e.g. special instruments to be counted outside the MFF ceilings). The committee believed that the entire amount cannot be covered through redeployments without affecting the delivery of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and that, therefore, this EUR 100 million must be a **frontloading of appropriations that will need to be compensated at a later stage**. Accordingly, it supported the mobilisation of the Contingency Margin for the remaining amount for this year as soon as necessary and invited the Commission to present a proposal in this respect.

Lastly, whilst calling on Parliament to adopt draft amending budget No 1/2016 as presented by the Commission, given the urgency of the situation, Members urged the Commission to exclude all agencies dealing in the broader sense with migration and security from the 5% staff reduction target as they are all understaffed given the tremendous increase in workload.