Guidelines for the 2020 budget – Section III

2019/2001(BUD) - 08/03/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Monika HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE) on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2020 budget, Section III – Commission.

Stressing that a strong, responsible and forward-looking 2020 budget will facilitate an agreement and the transition towards the next multiannual financial framework (MFF 2021-2027), Members intended to make full use of the existing flexibility and other provisions set out in the MFF Regulation and the Financial Regulation, in order to reinforce key EU programmes in the 2020 budget, taking due account of the performance-based budgeting approach in the EU budget.

Members considered that the EU budget for next year should define clear political priorities and enable the Union to act in the following areas:

1) Supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth to anticipate change and boost competitiveness

The report underlined the importance of Europe's claim to leadership in key technologies in areas such as space, healthcare, the environment, agriculture, safety and transportation. Members intended to secure the largest possible annual allocation for Horizon 2020 in next year's budget, and highlighted, moreover, the importance of deepening synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds.

It also stressed the importance of additional investments in digital capabilities, including EU high-performance computing, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Members feel that the Digital Europe Programme is expected to secure a significantly higher allocation in the 2021-2027 MFF and, therefore, they intended to increase funding in this area in next year's budget.

They highlighted the success of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) pointing, however, to need to improve implementation with regard to the additionality of the projects selected. Members intended to secure sufficient funding for programmes such as COSME and Future and Emerging Technologies that significantly contribute to the success of start-ups and SME's.

2) Security and peace in Europe

Members called for:

- appropriate funding for all agencies active in the field of security, justice and external border control and for all agencies active in the field of migration, asylum and human rights;

- a further increase in the Union's defence budget, to be exclusively financed by fresh appropriations, in order to improve the competitiveness and innovation of the European defence industry;

- strengthened EU efforts to tackle rising security threats such as radicalisation and violent extremism within Europe and neighbouring countries as well as better coordination of such programmes at EU level;

- adequate financial resources to equip all relevant agencies with adequate funds to cover their tasks to help secure network and information systems, build strong cyber resilience, and combat cybercrime;

- the continuation, after Brexit, of the financing of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes which contribute to peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland;

- additional financial resources to strengthen the systematic use of strategic communication tools to enable a coordinated EU response to misinformation and other forms of foreign interference, in order to ensure regular and democratic elections, in particular in this year of European elections;

sufficient financial resources for the Commission to invest in tools to inform citizens about what the Union is doing;

- continued support for producers in Europe to cope with unexpected market fluctuations and to ensure the safety and quality of food by paying particular attention to small-scale agriculture and small-scale fisheries.

3) Strengthening solidarity and mutual understanding

Members called for:

- additional financial resources to meet future demand for Erasmus+, the primary programme for education and training;

- additional financial effort to combat youth unemployment by speeding up the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative, which reached a total of EUR 350 million in 2019;

- additional financial means for Union programmes that help to provide the aging European population with the necessary support for access to mobility, health care and public services;

- sufficient resources for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund to support the reception of asylum seekers in Member States, effective return strategies, resettlement programmes, policies for legal migration and the effective integration of third-country nationals;

- increased financial support for programmes contributing to partnerships in areas such as vocational training, start-ups, support for SMEs, health care and education, as well as for actions in favour of clean water, waste water treatment and waste disposal;

- the presentation of a framework for gender mainstreaming in the EU budget.

4) Tackling environmental challenges and climate change

Members considered that a significant increase in climate-related spending is essential in order to progress towards the objectives of the Union’s climate policy and of the Paris Agreement. They requested increased financial resources for all relevant Union programmes to support projects with European added value contributing to a clean energy transition and resource efficiency, the promotion of a sustainable green and blue economy, and nature conservation, with a focus on biodiversity, habitats and endangered species.

Brexit

The report asked the Commission to assess and prepare for all possible scenarios to ensure sound financial management of the Union budget and secure a contingency plan, defining clear commitments and outlying mechanisms, and protecting the EU budget in the event that the United Kingdom does not contribute to, or participate in, the implementation of the 2020 EU budget.