

Amending budget 1/2020: assistance to Greece in response to increased migration pressure; immediate measures in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak; support to post-earthquake reconstruction in Albania; other adjustments

2020/2052(BUD) - 27/03/2020 - Commission draft budget

PURPOSE: to present draft amending budget No 1/2020 to the general budget concerning assistance to Greece in response to the increased migration pressure Immediate measures in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak and support to post-earthquake reconstruction in Albania.

CONTENT: the purpose of Draft Amending Budget (DAB) No 1 for the year 2020 is to provide the following:

Migratory pressure in Greece

The situation in North East Syria risks placing significant and urgent demands on the Greek reception facilities and the asylum systems and procedures as well as on the effective protection of the external borders of Greece and Bulgaria.

The appropriations available in 2020 for the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Internal Security Fund (ISF) are not sufficient to face all the consequences of these unexpected developments. While EUR 350 million can be made available from the existing financial envelope of the two programmes, the Commission requests an additional EUR 350 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 20 million in payment appropriations to meet the impact of a potential worsening of the situation.

The requested EUR 350 million in commitment appropriations will be used as follows:

- EUR 280 million will be made available under AMIF to cover various activities in Greece;
- EUR 50 million is proposed to be made available under ISF Borders & Visa, to cover the costs related to the deployment and operational costs of borders guards and police officers at the external borders of Greece and/or Bulgaria and the acquisition of relevant equipment;
- an increase of EUR 10 million for the European Border and Coast Guard agency (Frontex);
- a EUR 10 million increase in commitment and payment appropriations is proposed for the EU contribution to European Asylum Support Office (EASO) for the deployment of experts in Greece.

Immediate support measures

The COVID-19 outbreak represents a severe public health emergency for citizens, societies and economies with infection spreading very rapidly in all Member States. Member States need to repatriate a large number of EU nationals stranded in third countries and face shortages of medical countermeasures and personal protective equipment essential to fight the disease. To help Member States meet these challenges and respond to the impact of the outbreak, the Commission proposes to allocate EUR 128.6 million in commitment appropriations:

- EUR 125 million under the the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and EUR 3.6 million for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). EUR 10 million will be redeployed within the UCPM and the reinforcement of ECDC is fully financed through redeployment.

Therefore, in total the Commission requests an additional EUR 115 million in commitment appropriations to reinforce the UCPM.

UCPM (within the Union)

The Commission will redeploy EUR 10 million in commitment appropriations to support COVID-19 medical countermeasures and equipment from within the existing UCPM/rescEU budget for 2020 (prevention and preparedness within the Union). However, given the magnitude of capacities needed, and related costs, the available budget is insufficient to cover the initiative. Reinforcements of EUR 70 million in commitment and EUR 40 million in payment appropriations are therefore requested.

UCPM (in third countries)

The current budget is largely insufficient given the average cost per repatriation action has so far been EUR 1 million. The Commission requests EUR 45 million in commitment appropriations to support Covid-19-related repatriations, and to respond swiftly to other emergency crises that might be coming in the course of the year. Given the urgency of the repatriations and the need for immediate action, the Commission will transfer the required funds from the humanitarian aid instrument, with the intention of proposing a budgetary transfer to the Council and the European Parliament later in the year to reinstate these commitment appropriations for the purposes of humanitarian aid.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Additional resources of EUR 3.6 million in both commitment and payment appropriations are proposed to increase the ECDC's capacity. The reinforcement of ECDC is proposed to be entirely financed through redeployment, by reducing the allocations for measures aimed at eradication of animal diseases by around 2 %, with very limited impact on the implementation of these measures.

Post-earthquake support in Albania

The earthquake which hit Albania on 26 November 2019 caused widespread damage and loss of life. The present DAB proposes EUR 100 million in commitment appropriations to support reconstruction efforts. EUR 15 million in payment appropriations are also proposed to cover advance payments in 2020 to implementing partners. The remaining payment appropriations will be covered as from the 2021 budget.

Financing

Heading 3: Security and Citizenship

The overall increase in commitment appropriations under Heading 3 amounts to EUR 423,3 million. Given the absence of margins and limited room for redeployment under this heading, the Commission proposes to mobilise special instruments for this amount as follows:

- to mobilise the Global Margin for Commitments for the migration related appropriations, i.e. EUR 350 million;
- to mobilise the Flexibility Instrument for all other expenditure exceeding the ceiling of heading 3 (EUR 73.3 million), i.e. to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and to provide additional means to European Public Prosecutor's Office. As a result, the amount of the Flexibility Instrument mobilised in the 2020 budget will increase from EUR 778.1 million to EUR 851.7 million.

Heading 4: Global Europe

The overall increase in commitment appropriations under Heading 4 amounts to EUR 145 million for the post-earthquake reconstruction in Albania (EUR 100 million) and the COVID-19 repatriation flights co-financed by the UCPM (EUR 45 million). This amount will be financed from the unallocated margin available under this heading (EUR 248.4 million).