Resolution on the European Council's position on the Financial Perspective and the renewal of the Interinstitutional Agreement 2007-2013

2006/2502(RSP) - 18/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution by 541 votes in favour to 56 against with 76 abstentions on the conclusions adopted by the European Council of 15-16 December 2005 concerning the Financial Perspective 2007-2013. Parliament noted the fact that the European Council finally found an agreement between Member States which allows for the opening of the negotiations with the European Parliament on the next Financial Perspective. To recall, the conclusions foresee an average figure of 1,045% of EU GNI in commitment appropriations for 27 Member States within the EU budget, with total commitment appropriations amounting to EUR 862,363 billion. The budget for the year 2006, the last year of the current Financial Perspective, amounts to 1,093% of EU GNI in commitment appropriations for 25 Member States.

Parliament noted that the conclusions of the European Council focus on traditional policies which are administrated by the Member States rather than putting emphasis on policies enabling the EU to face new challenges and to develop the European added value for citizens. It deplored in this context the unacceptable reduction in commitments in respect of competitiveness, growth and employment, despite the emphasis given by all the EU institutions to the Lisbon strategy, and the cuts in relation to citizenship, freedom, security and justice and external actions. Parliament deplored moreover that Member States fight to preserve their national interests rather than foster the European dimension, and were unable to address the major issue of reforming the own resources system.

Parliament recalled that the conclusions of the European Council - referring sometimes to very specific rules within spending programmes - cannot overrule the powers vested in the European Parliament as one arm of the legislative and budgetary authority, and insists on playing its full parliamentary role in the definition of policies, their reform and their budget.

It felt that its own negotiating position ensures a better match of political priorities and financial needs, a modernising of the budget through more flexibility, an improvement in the quality of implementation, with a financial framework amounting to EUR 974,837 billion, representing an average of 1,18% of EU GNI in commitment appropriations.

Accordingly, Parliament rejected the European Council's conclusions in their current form, because they do not guarantee an EU budget which will enhance prosperity, competitiveness, solidarity, cohesion and security in the future, in compliance with policies already decided by the Council itself. They fail to fulfil commitments made towards the new Member States and do not provide for a sufficient and detailed flexibility mechanism, a firm commitment to undertake the review with a clear role for the European Parliament or sufficient accompanying measures to ensure for example better implementation and control of expenditure of funds in Member States.

Parliament underlined the importance it attaches to a higher degree of flexibility, and stated its willingness to enter into constructive negotiations with the Council on the basis of respective positions provided the Austrian Presidency is entrusted with a real negotiating mandate.