



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 3 October 2014

13913/14

PE 350  
FIN 709  
INST 480

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament's  
Committee on Budgets (BUDG), held in Brussels 29 and 30 September 2014

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The meeting was chaired by Mr ARTHUIS (ALDE, FR).

**3. Chair's announcements**

No announcements were made.

\*\*\* *Voting time* \*\*\*

**4. General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015 - all sections**

*Co-rapporteurs: Ms GARDIAZÁBAL RUBIAL (S&D, ES) and Ms HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE)*

- Consideration and adoption of amendments

Mr ARTHUIS informed the Committee that approximately 1 500 amendments had been tabled on the Council's position by sectoral committees, political groups and individual members.

The rapporteur Ms GARDIAZÁBAL thanked all political groups for the flexibility demonstrated during the negotiations on a compromise package. She indicated that the agreement reached was more ambitious than Commission's proposal in terms of commitments and especially of payments for 2015, fully exploiting the flexibility mechanisms included in the MFF Regulation in order to tackle the current shortage of payments. Lastly, she showed openness to negotiating with the Council on the basis of the voted package.

Ms HOHLMEIER elaborated on the proposed transfer of several former BA lines from Section III (Commission) of the budget to Section X (European External Action Service). She indicated that this amendment was for the purpose of simplification and that it was budgetary neutral. She added that this amendment was not intended to introduce neither new cuts to the Commission's budget nor changes in terms of staff or tasks.

Mr DEPRez (ALDE, BE) confirmed the support of his group for the rapporteurs' package, but raised some concerns regarding both the proposed mobilisation of the contingency margin in the framework for the budget for 2015 and the proposed increase of appropriations for other special instruments outside the MFF.

Mr ARTHUIS recalled that during the recent inter-institutional meeting on the payments situation held on 24 September, Minister ZANETTI had not questioned the Commission's figures. He therefore considered that a clear plan to settle the current backlog of payments should be urgently adopted. In his opinion, delays in payments were unacceptable and showed a deplorable image of the EU.

The Commission's representative, Director-General Ms CALVIÑO, welcomed the amendments aiming at restoring the draft budget proposed by the Commission, in particular the reinstatement of commitments in Sub-heading 1.a and Heading 4. Regarding payments, she considered that the cut of EUR 2 billion made by the Council was a restriction on the normal implementation of the budget for 2015 and called on the budgetary authority to swiftly adopt Draft Amending Budget No 3/2014 in order to "regain control of the EU's budget". She added that the intended transfer of former BA lines from Section III (Commission) of the budget to Section X (EEAS) could be accepted only if the operation was budgetary neutral.

Nevertheless, Ms CALVIÑO pointed out that the amendments to the establishment plans of several decentralised agencies could lead to an increase in posts, which would be contradictory to the staff reduction target stated in point 27 of the IIA on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management. She added that the reserves entered in the budget deserved a thorough assessment in order to respect the autonomy of all institutions and bodies. She questioned in particular the Parliament's reserve, calling on the Commission to modify the rules on expert groups. Ms CALVIÑO recalled that the voted remarks could not modify the existing legal basis and that therefore some of the amendments proposed could only be interpreted as political orientations within the well-established legal framework. Lastly, she announced that the Commission will soon issue its traditional letter of executability on the amendments proposed by both arms of the budgetary authority.

Following this preliminary exchange of views, the Committee approved amendments covering all budget areas, notably:

- restoring across different headings all administrative support lines in the draft budget (DB) reduced by the Council;
- accepting the financing of new or existing pilot projects and preparatory actions;
- either restoring the budget of some decentralised agencies (with the exception of Europol only) or going above DB, including a substantial increase in posts;
- increasing the level of payment appropriations foreseen for the Emergency Aid Reserve and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund;
- either restoring or reinforcing payments above DB, reaching an overall amount of approximately EUR 4 billion over and above the payment ceiling;
- under sub-heading 1a:
  - increasing commitments above DB on lines related to the Parliament's priorities, namely Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus+, CEF Energy and both the digital and social agendas;
  - increasing payments above DB on the completion line of the previous research framework programme (FP7) and on more than thirty other lines, corresponding to the Parliament's priorities;
  - restoring DB for all other budget lines;

- under sub-heading 1b:
  - increasing both commitments and payments above DB for the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived;
  - increasing payments above DB for the completion lines of the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund;
  - restoring DB for all other budget lines;
  
- under heading 2:
  - increasing both commitments and payments above DB for the school fruit and school milk schemes;
  - reinforcing above DB the promotion measures in the common agricultural policy and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in order to alleviate the impact of the Russian ban;
  - restoring DB for all other budget lines;
  
- under heading 3:
  - increasing both commitments and payments above DB for the Culture and MEDIA sub-programmes, Europe for Citizens and Multimedia actions;
  - restoring DB on other lines;
  
- under heading 4:
  - increasing commitments above DB on lines related to the Parliament's priorities;
  - increasing payments above DB for Humanitarian Aid, the instrument for peace and stability, financial assistance to Palestine and on more than thirty other lines corresponding to the Parliament's priorities;
  - restoring DB on other lines;

- under heading 5:
  - largely restoring DB for all administrative expenditure across institutions;
  - reinforcing above DB both appropriations and the establishment plan of the Court of Justice, including a reserve on the possible increase of the number of judges at the General Court;
  - implementing the cooperation agreement between the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament;
  - transferring the administrative expenditure of delegations and EU Special Representative budget lines from Section III (Commission) to Section X (European External Action Service) of the budget;
  - increasing above DB the appropriations of the European External Action Service in order to set up a new EU delegation in the Gulf area in 2015.

*Draft calendar:*

*Deadline for tabling amendments to the resolution: 3 October 2014, 10:00*

*Vote in BUDG on the resolution: 7 October 2014*

*Deadline for re-tabling budgetary amendments not adopted by BUDG: 15 October 2014, 12:00*

*Adoption in plenary: 22 October 2014*

## **5. European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation of 2014 priorities**

*Rapporteur for the opinion: Mr TORVALDS (ALDE, FI)*

*Rapporteur for the responsible committee (ECON): Mr DE BACKER (ALDE, BE)*

The Committee voted for 28 amendments proposed in the draft opinion of the rapporteur.

The report, as amended, was adopted with 28 votes in favour and 4 abstentions.

*Draft calendar:*

*Vote in ECON: 13 October 2014*

*Vote in Plenary: October II*

*\*\*\* End of vote \*\*\**

## **6. Any other business**

No other item was discussed.

## 7. Next meetings

7 October 2014, 10:00 – 12:30

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