



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : General Secretariat of the Council
to : Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament's **Committee on Budgets** (BUDG) held in Brussels on 8 May 2012

The meeting was chaired by Mr LAMASSOURE (EPP, FR).

Item 4 on the agenda

2013 Budget - mandate for trilogue
BUDG/7/08796
Rapporteur: Mr LA VIA (EPP, IT)

This item was postponed.

Item 5 on the agenda

2012 Budget - Draft Amending Budget No 2/ 2012: EU Solidarity Fund appropriations to address flooding in Italy (Liguria and Tuscany) in 2011
BUDG/7/09159
Rapporteur: Ms BALZANI (S&D, IT)

The rapporteur, Ms BALZANI, informed the Committee about a letter by Commissioner LEWANDOWSKI suggesting financing this mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund in favour of Italy from payment appropriations expected to become available in 2012 due to delays in the implementation of energy projects to aid economic recovery.

The Chairman, Mr LAMASSOURE, considered that this was another example showing the urgent need to increase the flexibility in the current budgetary procedures, which should be taken duly into account in the ongoing negotiations on the revision of the Financial Regulation.

The BUDG vote on the rapporteur's draft report relating to draft amending budget No 2/2012 is scheduled on 31 May 2012.

Item 6 on the agenda

Common Fisheries Policy

BUDG/7/06598

Rapporteur: Mr ALFONSI (Greens/EFA, FR)

The rapporteur, Mr ALFONSI, was concerned about an excess capacity in the European fishing fleet which, from his point of view, would in the long run become an economic and social problem in many coastal areas. He therefore saw the need to considerably reduce fishing capacities, while protecting at the same time the traditional fishing profession.

Mr FÄRM (S&D, SE) emphasised the importance of an effective management of fisheries resources in order to ensure food security in Europe. He was also in favour of developing the European fishing fleet towards more selective fishing techniques.

Along the same lines, Mr HAGLUND (ALDE, FI) stressed the need for reform towards a more sustainable fisheries policy, in order to safeguard the economic basis for the fisheries sector in Europe.

Item 7 on the agenda

European Statistical Programme 2013-2017

BUDG/7/08393

Rapporteur: Mr EPPINK (ECR, BE)

The rapporteur, Mr EPPINK, presented his draft opinion for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs. He pointed out that the Commission's proposal for a new multiannual statistical programme had been presented under challenging political and economic circumstances, requiring timely, independent, accurate and reliable statistical information to support the development, monitoring and evaluation of policies at EU and national level. He suggested strengthening statistical activities and to implement new methods of producing statistics, aiming at efficiency gains and quality improvements.

Mr GEIER (S&D, DE) and Mr ŠŤASTNÝ (EPP, SK) supported the rapporteur by recalling the importance of high-quality statistical data at the heart of many key decisions taken in Europe. Mr GEIER also stressed the need for independent statistical authorities at national and EU level and the importance of their mutual cooperation.

The Chairman, Mr LAMASSOURE, criticised the existing delays in the collection and evaluation of statistical data. He urged all parties to accelerate their operations in order to provide timely data to support the decision-making process in Europe.

Item 8 on the agenda

Establishment of an action programme for customs and taxation in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (FISCUS) and repeal of Decisions no 1482/2007/EC and no 624/2007/EC BUDG/7/08190

Rapporteur: Mr FAJMON (ECR, CZ)

The rapporteur, Mr FAJMON, presented his draft opinion for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and for the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection. In agreement with the rapporteurs and Presidents of these Committees, he considered that two separate legal bases should be maintained for the taxation part and for the customs part of the programme, as it was the case for the current programmes (Fiscalis and Customs), both ending in December 2013.

Mr STOLOJAN (EPP, RO) informed the Committee that a corresponding request to the Commission to withdraw its proposal and to present two separate programme proposals was currently prepared jointly with the Presidency of the Council.

Mr GEIER did not understand the need for such separation. From his point of view, both parts of the proposed programme dealt with the protection of the EU's financial interests and could be implemented more efficiently under the same umbrella.

Item 9 on the agenda

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: EGF/2012/000 TA 2012 - Request for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission BUDG/7/09278

Rapporteur: Mr KOZŁOWSKI (EPP, PL)

The rapporteur, Mr KOZŁOWSKI, presented his draft report proposing to approve the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for technical assistance at the initiative of

the Commission and the proposed amount. He regretted the Council's decision not to extend the crisis derogation of the EGF beyond December 2011, given the current economic and financial circumstances and the significant number of workers made redundant in the Member States.

Mr DAERDEN (S&D, BE) and Mr HAGLUND questioned parts of the elements included by the Commission in its proposal for a mobilisation of the EGF. Mr HAGLUND raised general doubts if the intended added value could be reached through the EGF.

The BUDG vote on the rapporteur's draft report is scheduled on 31 May 2012.

Item 10 on the agenda

Consumer programme 2014-2020

BUDG/7/07738

Rapporteur: Mr FERNANDES (EPP, PT)

The rapporteur, Mr FERNANDES, presented his draft opinion for the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, suggesting inter alia to set up a European accreditation centre for online companies, to establish a set of appropriate statistical indicators to assess the functioning of the internal market, and to create a Union-wide electronic platform for consumers to file complaints and to share and receive information.

The rapporteur's consideration that the amount proposed by the Commission for administrative expenditure relating to the implementation of the programme was too high, compared to the proposed total budget of the programme, was opposed by Mr FÄRM and Ms HAUG (S&D, DE) who emphasised that the overall amount foreseen for the programme was very small in absolute terms.

Item 11 on the agenda

Establishing common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for external action

BUDG/7/08643

Rapporteur: Ms NEYNSKY (EPP, BG)

The rapporteur, Ms NEYNSKY, presented her draft opinion for the Committee on Foreign Affairs. She invited the Commission to increase transparency on EU expenditure for external action by consolidating information on all external action instruments by beneficiary country and area of application. In addition, the oversight on the use of innovative financial instruments and the level of

participation of partners would need to be improved, in order to ensure the consistency and complementarity of funding aiming at budgetary synergies and multiplier effects for the EU budget through the pooling of resources and expertise with partners.

Ms BRANTNER (Greens/EFA, DE) supported the rapporteur by calling for a better monitoring and evaluation of the different external action instruments, to limit the risk of overlapping tasks and initiatives.

Ms MUÑIZ DE URQUIZA (S&D, ES) urged facilitating the participation of civil society organisations in the implementation of the Union's instruments for external action, and explicitly foreseeing their eligibility in the regulation.

Item 12 on the agenda

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)

BUDG/7/08315

Rapporteur: Ms NEYNSKY (EPP, BG)

The rapporteur, Ms NEYNSKY, presented her draft opinion for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, urging the Commission not to decrease in real terms the funding for each beneficiary country, when compared with the current multiannual financial framework (MFF). She pointed out that, due to their improving administrative and institutional capacity, beneficiary countries are likely to absorb funding at a greater rate which might result in an increased demand for funds in the coming years.

Mr FÄRM asked to put more emphasis on the need for better coordination between donors, but also on simplification, increased flexibility and efficiency of the current and future instruments. He was in favour of a more extensive use of financial instruments and would like to target the measures notably on civil society and social partners. Moreover, the fight against fraud and corruption would need to be reinforced from his point of view.

Item 13 on the agenda

Financial rules applicable to the annual budget of the Union

BUDG/7/04994

Rapporteurs: Ms GRÄSSLE (EPP, DE), Mr RIVELLINI (EPP, IT)

The rapporteur, Ms GRÄSSLE, provided an overview of the progress made in the negotiations with the Council and the Commission on the revision of the Financial Regulation, and of the 14 open

issues to be discussed at the upcoming trilogues in May and June 2012. She stressed the urgency of this file, given that the new Financial Regulation as well as the corresponding Implementing Rules should ideally be in place by the end of this year as a basis for finalising the various sectoral legislation relating to the next MFF. She therefore pointed out that her aim was a first-reading agreement, and that this aim was shared by the Danish Presidency of the Council and by the Commission. However, in order to reach a fast agreement, she emphasised that the European Parliament would have to make concessions, notably on amendments relating to the MFF and to shared management.

For Mr THEURER (ALDE, DE) and Ms BRANTNER, the provisions on shared management were the key issue in the negotiations with the Council. Ms BRANTNER also encouraged the rapporteur to insist on provisions for creating EU trust funds, and on a clearer definition of "crisis" and "urgency" situations in the revised Financial Regulation.

The Chairman, Mr LAMASSOURE, added that more flexibility was required in the rules for implementing the annual budget during the last month of the year.

Item 14 on the agenda

2012 Budget: Section III - Commission

Rapporteur: Ms BALZANI (S&D, IT)

Transfer proposal DEC03/2012 (EGF/technical assistance) was approved, in spite of doubts by several Committee members as the corresponding report on the mobilisation of the EGF had not yet been adopted.

Transfer proposal DEC05/2012 (Administrative expenditure/release of reserves) was rejected.

Item 15 on the agenda

2012 Budget: other sections

Rapporteur: Mr FERNANDES (EPP, PT)

No transfer requests were presented.

Item 16 on the agenda

Buildings policy

BUDG/7/04688

Rapporteur: Ms HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE)

The rapporteur, Ms HOHLMEIER, outlined the European Parliament's project to renovate and extend the Eastman building in Brussels in order to accommodate the House of European History. Several Committee members (Mr LYON (ALDE, UK), Ms BRZOBOHATÁ (S&D, CZ), Mr HARTONG (NI, NL)) raised questions and concerns about the content and the cost of the project, about the possibility of a financial contribution by the Commission, and about the capacity of the European Parliament's administration to manage a project of such scale.

The BUDG vote on the possible issuing of an opinion on this building project is scheduled on 31 May 2012.

Furthermore, the Committee decided not to issue an opinion on the European Parliament's lease of the Science/Montoyer building in Brussels, as recommended by the rapporteur.

Item 17 on the agenda

Any other business

No other item was discussed.

Item 18 on the agenda

Date of next meeting

Thursday 10 May 2012, 15h00 - 18h30 (Brussels)