



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 19 December 2014

17093/14

PE 421
FIN 1013
INST 641

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 11 December 2014

The meeting was chaired by Mr ARTHUIS (ALDE, FR) and Mr GEIER (S&D, DE).

4. Negotiations on budgets 2014 and 2015

Mr ARTHUIS (ALDE, FR) explained the main lines of the agreement reached between the European Parliament and the Council following the trilogue on 8 December 2014. He considered the outcome of the negotiations satisfactory for the European Parliament. He added that longer negotiations to get a better result for the European Parliament could have compromised the reaching of an agreement in 2014, thus leading to a provisional twelfths system for the beginning of 2015 and to the "cancelling" of the pending 2014 draft amending budgets.

Ms GARDIAZÁBAL (S&D, ES), rapporteur for the budget for 2015 (Section III - Commission), highlighted that the level of payments for 2014 and 2015 was increased by EUR 4.7 billion. She expressed her disappointment about the lack of time to discuss the commitments for 2015. Nevertheless symbolic increases in commitments were made on sensitive areas like Erasmus, the Emergency Aid Reserve and help for Palestinian refugees in the Middle East.

Ms HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE), rapporteur for the budget for 2015 (Other Sections), pointed out that the main concerns of the European Parliament were included in the agreement, namely its reading for every institution and the transfer of administrative expenditure from the Commission to the European External Action Service.

Mr DEPREZ (ALDE, BE), rapporteur for the budget for 2014, explained that the initial request of the Commission was an increase of EUR 4.8 billion in payments for 2014, and the final agreement included an increase of EUR 4.2 billion in payments, of which EUR 3.5 billion was "fresh money". He underlined that a very important part of the agreement was the joint statement on a payment plan to reduce the backlog of unpaid bills.

Mr FERNANDES (EPP, PT) expressed his satisfaction with the agreement and pointed out that if agreement had not been reached in 2014, Member States would have "recovered" EUR 5 billion from the EU budget.

Mr GEIER (S&D, DE) stated that the amount of payments in the agreement represented a small step in reducing the level of unpaid bills. He added that the agreement of the Council on a payment plan was very positive and he requested the Commission to provide a detailed breakdown of the unpaid amounts by Member State.

Mr TANG (S&D, NL) welcomed the outcome of the negotiations, and more specifically the agreement on a payment plan. Concerning revenue, he argued in favour of increased predictability of needs, especially in the case of the GNI resource.

Mr ECHENIQUE (GUE/NGL, ES) stressed the difficulty of explaining this complex agreement to European citizens.

Mr MAŇKA (S&D, SK) supported the request from Mr GEIER for a breakdown of unpaid bills by Member State. He insisted on the need for a "real own resources system" for the EU budget.

Ms VANA (Greens, AT) expressed her disappointment with the results for the budget for 2015 and announced that her group would vote against this part of the agreement. Meanwhile she considered that the outcome of the negotiations on the budget for 2014 was acceptable and that her group would support it.

The Commission (represented by Ms CALVIÑO, DG BUDG) stated that the outcome of the negotiations was very balanced. She added that, given the difficult budgetary situation in some Member States, it was impossible to meet all the expectations of the European Parliament, but the overall result was still positive. She pointed out that not every standing issue could be solved in a single budgetary year. She underlined that it was a common agreement and that "no institution has won or lost the negotiations".

The Chair concluded that, given the experience of this negotiation, the European Parliament should start preparing the future MFF revision.

5. Amendment of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1150/2000 implementing Decision 2007/436/EC, Euratom on the system of the European Communities' own resources

Rapporteur: Mr DEPRez (ALDE, BE)/Mr LEWANDOWSKI (EPP, PL)

The rapporteurs recalled that this file was subject to an urgent procedure as part of the global package of negotiations on the budget 2015.

6. Commission communication on "an investment plan for Europe"

- Exchange of views

The Commission gave a short presentation on the main elements of the investment plan for Europe (the "Juncker Plan"). The aim of this plan is to mobilise EUR 315 billion of investments in three years through a new financial instrument: the European Fund for Strategic Investments. The European Investment Bank will participate in the guarantee of this Fund, as well as the EU budget. The financing from the EU budget will amount to EUR 8 billion including from the existing margins in the Connecting Europe Facility and the Horizon 2020 programme. A draft amending budget, dealing only with commitments, will be presented in 2015. Concrete projects would be validated by an independent investment committee. The Commission explained that the plan was not yet entirely defined, and promised more information when available.

The chair, Mr GEIER (S&D, DE), expressed concern about the level of risks that this plan would entail.

Mr LEWANDOWSKI (EPP, PL) questioned the high leveraging factor envisaged by the Commission and expressed doubts as to the availability of margins in sub-heading 1a.

Mr BÖGE (EPP, DE) spoke of a lack of realism in the Commission's proposal and requested more involvement of the European Parliament in the design of the investment plan.

Ms GARDIAZABAL (S&D, ES) requested detailed information on the commitments in 2015 and on the establishing of a legal basis for the Fund. She also asked for clarification on the functioning of the Investment Committee.

Mr FERNANDES (EPP, PT) requested information on the level of payments foreseen in 2016 and on the period of guarantee to be covered by the Fund.

Mr MAŇKA (S&D, SK) stressed the importance of removing barriers to investment and pointed out that the EU needed to pay its bills promptly in order to be considered a credible partner.

Mr ECHENIQUE (GUE/NGL, ES) expressed his concern about the use of public funds to cover private investors' risks.

Mr ALI (ALDE, BG) pointed out that the investment strategy should support the real economy and not become a wish list for Member States.

Mr ARNOTT (EFDD, UK) expressed doubts about the large multiplier effect expected by the Commission and recalled that in the case of similar initiatives in the UK, the results were lower than expected.

Mr TARAND (Greens, EE) shared the concerns of Mr LEWANDOWSKY on the availability of margins and proposed that the appointment of members to the Investment Committee should be supervised by Parliament (BUDG).

The Chair proposed that the Commission give a short answer on the issues raised and send further information in writing.

The Commission stated that its estimate of the multiplier effect was rather conservative. It explained that the guarantees awarded by the Fund should go beyond 2020. It insisted on the availability of margins in the current MFF to finance this plan.

7. The 2013 annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament

Rapporteur: Mr TARAND (Greens, EE)

The rapporteur limited his presentation to underlining the negative consequences of the generalised payments shortfalls in the EU budget for CFSP.

*** *Voting time* ***

8. Amendment of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1150/2000 implementing Decision 2007/436/EC, Euratom on the system of the European Communities' own resources

Rapporteur: Mr DEPRez (ALDE, BE)/Mr LEWANDOWSKI (EPP, PL)

The report, as amended, was adopted with 30 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions.

9. Mobilisation of the EGF: application EGF/2014/013 EL/Odyssefs Fokas, submitted by Greece

Rapporteur: Ms VANA (Greens/EFA, AT)

The report, as amended, was adopted with 28 votes in favour, 2 against and no abstentions.

10. Mobilisation of the EGF: application FEM/2013/014 FR/Air France from France

Rapporteur: Mr ZANNI (EFDD, IT)

The report, as amended, was adopted with 26 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

11. Mobilisation of the EGF: application EGF/2013/006 PL/Fiat Auto Poland S.A. from Poland

Rapporteur: Mr OLBRYCHT (EPP, PL)

The report, as amended, was adopted with 27 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions.

12. Mobilisation of the EGF: application EGF/2013/010 IT/Whirlpool from Italy

Rapporteur: Mr VIOTTI (S&D, IT)

The report, as amended, was adopted with 28 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions.

13. 2014 budget: Section III - Commission

Rapporteur: Mr DEPRez (ALDE, BE)

Transfers No DEC 40, 46, 49, 50, and 55 were approved.

14. 2014 budget: Other Sections

Rapporteur: Ms HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE)

EEAS transfer No 2/2014 was approved, but the EEAS must submit detailed information on the new head of delegation residence in Tirana before its purchase.

15. Building policy

Rapporteur: Ms HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE)

The creation of a visitor reception area in the European Parliament in Brussels was approved.

*** *End of vote* ***

16. Any other business

None.

Next meeting

15 December 2014 at 19:00 in Strasbourg
