



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Committee on Budgets

2014/2221(INI)

5.1.2015

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: annual growth
survey 2015
(2014/2221(INI))

Rapporteur (*): Jean Arthuis

(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Emphasises that the principle of budgetary accuracy in public accounts shall govern the drawing up of national budgets and the EU budget; is convinced that said accuracy is one factor in the response to the crisis of confidence existing between the Member States and between said Member States and the citizens of the European Union;
2. Calls accordingly for economic assumptions employed in drawing up national budgets to be harmonised; considers in particular that there ought to be a common assessment of factors in the international economic situation;
3. Calls for greater uniformity in the presentation of public accounts so as to facilitate comparisons; calls in particular for the way in which Member States enter their contributions to the EU budget in their accounts to be standardised; is of the opinion that any operating expenses financed by borrowing ought to be shown as a separate figure which is added to investment expenditure when calculating the deficit;
4. Calls on the Commission to offset any democratic deficit in the semester by means of the package of measures announced for 2015 on deepening economic and monetary union; reiterates its demand that any additional funding or instruments, such as a solidarity mechanism, shall fall within the scope of Parliament's budgetary oversight;
5. considers it vital that the European Parliament and the national parliaments collaborate more closely in the context of the European Semester on economic and budgetary governance; undertakes to deepen its relations with the national parliaments in a spirit of constructive partnership in order to enhance parliamentary oversight of the Commission and the Council on the one hand and national governments and government bodies on the other; hopes to see the 2015 European Parliamentary Week and the conference referred to in Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance contribute to this goal;
6. Recalls that the principle of budgetary accuracy applies to the EU budget too and insists on there being sufficient financing for approved commitments; notes that in spite of Parliament's warnings, this principle is being compromised by the current level of outstanding payments and the growing gap between payments and commitments; regrets that this is proving detrimental to the goals set at the highest political level for growth and employment – notably youth employment – and fears that this will deepen the gulf between the European Union and its citizens;
7. Repeats its call for the MFF mid-term review to prepare for a possible reduction in the period for which the next MFF is agreed, so as to ensure its subsequent renegotiation during the mandate of each Parliament and Commission, thus ensuring democratic legitimacy for decisions on the financial perspectives of the European Union, while taking steps to meet the need for stability in programming cycles and investment predictability;

8. Calls for the mid-term review of the MFF to identify better the value added by EU funding to the goals of competitiveness, growth, employment and energy transition set by the European Union;
9. Calls once more on the Council to agree with Parliament and the Commission on a common method for assessing real payment needs in accordance with commitments made by the two arms of the budgetary authority;
10. Regrets once again that Member States persist in viewing their contribution to the EU budget as an adjustment variable in their consolidation efforts, which in turn leads to an artificial reduction in the volume of payments available in the EU budget; proposes therefore that when examining national budgets, the Commission shall enter in the calculations of deficits each country's share of unpaid invoices in order to draw attention to the true state of affairs concerning liabilities attributable to each Member State;
11. Welcomes the EUR 315 billion investment plan presented by Commission President Mr Juncker to offset on the one hand the deficit in public and private investment brought about by fiscal consolidation efforts, and to stimulate economic activity on the other;
12. Confirms its willingness to examine with the utmost vigilance how financial commitments by the EU and the EIB to the European Strategic Investment Fund are entered in the budget and in the 2015 budget in particular;
13. Calls on the Member States to top up this fund and welcomes the Commission's intention to exclude national contributions from stability pact calculations; rejects the idea of any attempts to renationalise the fund or argue for a fair return which could ensue from national contributions; wishes to see trans-European and supranational projects chosen so that citizens may be able to associate the benefits arising from these projects with action by the European Union.