



TEXTS ADOPTED

Provisional edition

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General budget of the European Union for 2019 - all sections

European Parliament resolution of 24 October 2018 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019 (11737/2018 – C8-0410/2018 – 2018/2046(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,
- having regard to Council Decision 2014/335/EU, Euratom of 26 May 2014 on the system of own resources of the European Union¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU, and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012³,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020⁴ (the “MFF Regulation”),

¹ OJ L 168, 7.6.2014, p. 105.

² OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

³ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

- having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 March 2018 on general guidelines for the preparation of the budget²,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 April 2018 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2019³,
- having regard to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019, which the Commission adopted on 21 June 2018 (COM(2018)0600),
- having regard to the position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019, which the Council adopted on 4 September 2018 and forwarded to Parliament on 13 September 2018 (11737/2018 – C8-0410/2018),
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2018 on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2019 draft budget⁴,
- having regard to Letter of amendment No 1/2019 (COM(2018)0709) to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019,
- having regard to Rule 88 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets and the opinions of the other committees concerned (A8-0313/2018),

Section III

General overview

1. Stresses that Parliament's reading of the 2019 Budget fully reflects the political priorities adopted by an overwhelming majority in its abovementioned resolutions of 15 March 2018 on general guidelines and of 5 July 2018 on a mandate for the trilogue; recalls that at the core of those priorities are: sustainable growth, innovation, competitiveness, security, tackling root causes of refugees and migration flows, managing refugee and migration flows, the fight against climate change and the transition to sustainable energy, and a particular focus on young people;
2. Highlights that ahead of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union, the Union needs the necessary financial resources to respond to citizens expectations, to allow the Union to effectively tackle the numerous abovementioned priorities and challenges it faces and to improve the day-to-day life of its citizens;
3. Points out that Europe's citizens expect the Union to strain every sinew to ensure economic growth and foster job creation evenly within all its regions; recalls that

¹ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0089.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0182.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0311.

meeting those expectations requires investments in research and innovation, digitalisation, education, infrastructure and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to foster employment, particularly among the young people of Europe; expresses disapproval that the Council yet again proposes cuts to the very programmes that are designed to make the Union economy more competitive and innovative; stresses moreover that many of those programmes, for example Horizon 2020, are heavily oversubscribed, which constitutes a poor use of resources and means that many excellent projects do not receive funding; highlights also the fact that programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) provide a vivid demonstration of the advantages of working together across the Union and help create a feeling of European belonging; decides therefore to reinforce considerably Erasmus+ and to strengthen programmes that contribute to growth and job creation, including Horizon 2020, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and COSME;

4. Reiterates its commitment to its pledges made during the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) negotiations, namely to minimise the impact of EFSI-related cuts on Horizon 2020 and CEF in the framework of the annual budgetary procedure; proposes, therefore, to offset those cuts by restoring the original annual profile of those two programmes, in order to allow them to fully accomplish the objectives agreed during the adoption of the relevant legislation;
5. Highlights that youth unemployment remains unacceptably high in certain Member States especially in the economically lagging regions and that the situation of young people in NEET (not in education, employment or training) situations and the long-term unemployed is particularly worrying; stresses that young people are the most at risk of poverty and social and economic exclusion; decides therefore to reinforce the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) beyond the level proposed by the Commission; stresses that such reinforcement should in no way be seen as a frontloading of the YEI allocation endorsed in the context of the MFF mid-term revision; and urges Member States to increase the level of absorption of the funding and create more quality youth employment;
6. Recalls the necessity of a strong fight against poverty;
7. Recalls that cohesion policy plays a primary role in the development and growth of the Union and in the convergence in Member States and regions; emphasises Parliament's commitment to ensuring adequate appropriations for those programmes that represent a core policy of the Union;
8. Stresses that the Funds under the Cohesion policy should neither directly or indirectly support relocation as defined in Article 2(61a) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014; urges Member States' managing authorities to ensure that contributions under the Funds are not granted to beneficiaries that have carried out a relocation within five years preceding the application for a contribution; and to ensure that contributions are repaid in full from beneficiaries that carry out a relocation within five years after having received the contribution;
9. Regrets that, under current projections, only 19,3 % of the Union budget 2014 – 2020 would be devoted to climate-related measures, failing thus to reach the target of 20 %, an objective which pre-dates the Paris Climate agreement; understands that this is

largely due to delays in cohesion policy and the rural development programmes; urges Member States, who manage them, to speed up their implementation with a focus on climate-related spending in order to offset the lower allocations made during the first years of the MFF; calls on the Commission to develop an action plan within programmes having massive potential to contribute to reaching the climate-related spending target; calls also for a robust, annual consolidation exercise to progress towards the mainstreaming target, with concrete and coherent safeguards that guarantee climate proof budgetary decisions are in line with the Union's commitments under the Paris agreement, with comprehensive reporting to launch initiatives if targets are not met;

10. Underlines that Heading 3 has been largely mobilised in recent years to address the migratory and refugee challenge and that such actions should continue and be reinforced as much and for as long as needed; calls on the Commission to actively monitor the adequacy of allocations under Heading 3 and make full use of all available instruments to respond in a timely manner to any unforeseen event that might require additional funding in the area of migration with a special attention to the case of island regions falling under the scope of Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; decides to reinforce the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to fully cover the needs of the Union in the field of migration, notably to support Member States in improving reception conditions, integration measures and practices for asylum seekers and migrants, and enhancing solidarity and responsibility-sharing between the Member States and fair and effective return strategies; notes, once again, that the Heading 3 ceiling is inadequate to provide appropriate funding to the internal dimension of those priorities, as well as to other priority programmes, for example in the fields of health, food safety, security, justice, citizenship and culture; considers that local authorities with the willingness to support the Union Resettlement Programme should be further supported through the direct management strand of the AMIF;
11. Insists that in the light of recent security concerns across the Union, funding under Heading 3 should also pay particular attention to measures which will lead to enhancing security of Union citizens; decides for that reason to reinforce agencies in the field of Justice and Home Affairs such as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), European Union Agency for the operational management of Large-Scale IT Systems (eu-LISA), the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust) and for the new European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) which, due to increased workload and additional tasks, have been facing shortage of staff and funding in the past years;
12. Reiterates that part of the solution to the migratory and refugee challenge as well as to the security concerns of Union citizens lies in addressing the root causes of migration and devoting sufficient financial means to internal and external instruments that aim at tackling issues such as poverty, lack of employment, education and economic opportunities, instability, conflict and climate change in the European Neighbourhood and Africa; is of the opinion that the Union should make optimal use of financial means under Heading 4 which proved to be insufficient to equally address all external challenges;

13. Acknowledges the challenges posed to some Member States by the large influx of migrants and asylum seekers; regrets that all efforts to establish a fair and humane migrant scheme at Union level have been unsuccessful so far;
14. Regrets that Parliament has not been duly involved in the discussions on the extension of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRT); reiterates its longstanding position that new initiatives must not be financed to the detriment of existing Union external projects; maintains, while recalling its support for the continuation of the FRT, that, given the stretched situation under Heading 4 to respond to external challenges, including migration, the Union budget should contribute to the financing of the second tranche in the same proportion as for the first one, i.e. EUR 1 billion, while the Member States should contribute EUR 2 billion to its financing;
15. Recalls the importance of Turkey as a neighbouring country, including for regional stability, and stresses the need for Turkey to respect international law in the region and to return to a reform path that guarantees the wellbeing of its citizens and the full respect of all their rights;
16. Restores all cuts proposed by Council to the Draft Budget 2019 (2019 DB) across all headings, with limited exceptions in Heading 4 and subheading 1b; refuses to accept the proposed cuts to programs with the highest European added value, for example those to Horizon 2020 and CEF, two programmes already affected by redeployments to EFSI, or majority of cuts to external policies; stresses that the logic behind Council's cuts is not substantiated by the actual implementation figures and ignores the varying implementation patterns of certain programmes;
17. Concludes that, for the purpose of adequately financing all pressing needs, and considering the very tight or inexistent margins under certain headings in 2019, all means available in the MFF Regulation in terms of flexibility will need to be deployed; expects that the Council will share that approach and that an agreement will easily be reached in conciliation, allowing the Union to rise to the occasion and effectively respond to the challenges ahead, particularly given that this year's conciliation will be the last ahead of the May 2019 European elections;
18. Sets the overall level of appropriations for 2019 at EUR 166 340 415 936 in commitment appropriations and EUR 149 349 039 470 in payment appropriations, representing an increase of EUR 721 061 034 in commitment appropriations compared to the 2019 DB;

Subheading 1a – Competitiveness for growth and jobs

19. Rejects Council's unjustified EUR 794 million cuts to subheading 1a, which represent just over half of the overall Council cuts in commitments in MFF headings; notes that such cuts run counter to Council's stated political priorities; is concerned moreover that they could hamper implementation of programmes that play a vital role in the creation of jobs and growth, which could have a negative impact on the economy;
20. Points in that connection to programmes such as Horizon 2020 and CEF and the flagship space programmes, such as Copernicus, which provide very strong European added-value; regrets the significant Council cuts in the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation with an overwhelmingly negative impact on Horizon 2020

and especially regrets cuts in relevant budget lines such as Strengthening research in future and emerging technologies and Strengthening European research infrastructure; notes also that many of those programmes make an important contribution to the fight against climate change, and considers that that contribution should be strengthened; decides therefore to reverse all cuts made by the Council and, furthermore, to fully restore the original profile of the Horizon 2020 and CEF lines that were cut for the provisioning of the EFSI Guarantee Fund;

21. Recalls that Erasmus+ remains a highly valued and hugely popular programme promoting youth learning mobility and vocational training, as demonstrated by the volume of applications received, which by far exceeds the funding available, and notes also that it helps foster a strong sense of European identity and encouragement for young people to take part in European democracy; deeply regrets that the 2019 DB for Erasmus+ falls well below Parliament's expectations, failing to go beyond the programmed figures under the current MFF; considers it therefore essential to reinforce the education and training and youth strands of Erasmus +, as a corollary to the strengthening of the YEI under subheading 1b;
22. Regrets that after the publication, on 3 February 2014, of its first EU Anti-Corruption report, the Commission refused to continue that practice of annual reports and instead integrated anti-corruption policies into the Economic Semester; notes that the country-specific reports in the context of the Economic Semester do not contain a clear description of the state of play, nor do they contain recommendations on anti-corruption measures for all Member States; urges the Commission once more to submit to Parliament a second EU Anti-Corruption report, and in this context not to evaluate anti-corruption efforts only in terms of economic loss but to also analyse the detrimental effects of corruption on the fundamental rights of Union citizens;
23. Recalls the importance of fostering extensive synergies between CEF-Transport and CEF-Digital in order to maximise the financial leverage for projects aimed at boosting the digitalisation of the TEN-T corridors;
24. Highlights yet again the fact that SMEs are an essential part of the Union economy and play a crucial role in job creation throughout the Union; believes that there is a need to create an SME-friendly business environment, as well as to support SME clusters and networks, supporting also cooperative companies with social, solidarity and ethic practices; notes, however, with deep concern the Council cuts to the SME instrument, which send a contradictory signal to businesses in the Union; considers that the Union budget and access to finance backed by it, start-ups and microenterprises can be a key tool in making SMEs more competitive and more innovative and in fostering the spirit of enterprise in the Union; recalls in that regard COSME and Horizon 2020;
25. Decides, therefore, to further reinforce, beyond the 2019 DB and the pre-EFSI profiles, those programmes that are key to boosting growth and jobs and tackling climate change and that reflect widely agreed Union priorities, namely Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 (including Marie Curie, leadership in space, European Research Council, SME Instrument), COSME, CEF and EaSI;
26. Increases therefore the level of commitment appropriations for subheading 1a above the 2019 DB by EUR 566 773 112 (excluding pre-EFSI restoration, compensation for the European Labour Authority proposal, pilot projects and preparatory actions), to be

financed within the margin available and by a further mobilisation of the Global Margin for Commitments;

27. Welcomes the commitment to a renewed Union defence agenda, namely through the agreement on the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP); expresses its intention to pay particular attention to the implementation by the Commission of the agreements found on the EDIDP and the European Solidarity Corps, as set out in the Amending Letter issued by the Commission on 16 October 2018;

Subheading 1b – Economic, social and territorial cohesion

28. Welcomes the decreasing rate of youth unemployment at Union level with 14,8 % (as of 1 October 2018), but regrets that the level still remains unacceptably high in certain Member States; emphasises that, in order to address that issue, it is of importance to ensure proper funding of the Youth Guarantee schemes through YEI and the European Social Fund (ESF); welcomes the agreement on the need to provide fresh funding for YEI, and the inclusion of the corresponding appropriations in the 2019 DB; considers nevertheless that, given the challenges and risks posed by youth unemployment, YEI should benefit from increased appropriations and therefore decides to bring YEI to EUR 580 million in commitments in 2019; considers that that increase is in addition to the amount for YEI currently programmed for the 2014-2020 period;
29. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the implementation of cohesion policy programmes is accelerated to catch up with the delays; notes that even though the Council has not questioned the level of payment appropriations as proposed by the Commission, Parliament will carefully examine the Commission's updated forecasts, to adjust the payment appropriations to real needs in order to avoid the reconstitution of a payment backlog at the end of the current MFF;
30. Emphasises, with regret, that disasters generally affect those who have less means to protect themselves; notes that the response to natural or man-made disasters should be as rapid as possible so that damage is minimal and people and property can be saved; highlights the need for an additional increase in funds, particularly in the budget lines linked to disaster prevention and preparedness within the Union, taking into account, in particular, fires in Greece, Spain and Portugal (resulting in a tragic loss of human life), which have a dramatic and substantial impact on people;
31. In line with the agreement reached on the revision of the Structural Reforms Support Programme (SRSP), agrees with the transfer of EUR 40 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 17,2 million in payment appropriations from subheading 1b to Heading 2;

Heading 2 – Sustainable growth: natural resources

32. Recalls that the Commission's proposal to increase appropriations to finance the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) needs is largely due to a significantly lower amount of assigned revenue being expected to be available in 2019;
33. Notes the Council's cuts of EUR 310 million in commitment appropriations (- 0,52 % compared to 2019 DB) and EUR -328,13 million in payment appropriations (- 0,57 % compared to 2019 DB), but considers that the Commission's Amending Letter should

remain the basis for any reliable revision of EAGF appropriations and restores the 2019 DB levels accordingly, pending an examination of that Amending Letter in conciliation;

34. Decides to increase the funding for the emergency support in particular for pig-meat against the African swine fever in order to reduce the negative impact upon farmers and employees in the regions most affected by the disease; decides to express its strong support for the agricultural sector in the Union by increasing the appropriations for fruit and vegetables, in order to tackle the effects of the crisis in the sector and the effects of the Russian embargo, as well as for measures to tackle the effects of *Xylella fastidiosa* and the volatility of the price of olive oil;
35. Points out the essential role played by the Union decentralised agencies in the area of the environment, public health and food safety in aiding the Union and the Member States make informed, science-based decisions about protecting and improving the environment and public health, while enhancing cooperation between Member States to address the concerns of Union citizens;
36. Decides to propose an increase of EUR 20 million above the level of the 2019 DB for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to promote innovation in the agriculture and forestry sectors and to ensure the profitability and sustainability of those livelihoods in the future;
37. Decides, in line with its Europe 2020 targets and with its international commitments to tackle climate change, to propose an increase of EUR 15,6 million above the level of the 2019 DB for climate-related actions; moreover, recalls the Union's commitments to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity and underlines that that increase contributes also to biodiversity protection;
38. Decides, in the light of the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the SRSP revision, to lift the reserve introduced by the Council on the amounts transferred from subheading 1b;
39. Points to the effects of the extreme drought affecting the Member States in recent months, causing considerable losses to agriculture and jeopardising a large number of businesses, and highlights in that regard the need to guarantee support measures aimed at helping the worst-affected farmers;
40. Decides to use the maximum appropriations for POSEI programmes provided for in the relevant Regulation¹, underlining the relevance of those programmes for the resilience of the agricultural producers and highlights the fragile economic situation of the outermost regions;
41. Increases therefore commitment appropriations by EUR 154,1 million, excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions, leaving a margin of EUR 190,8 million below the ceiling for commitments in Heading 2;

¹ Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006 (OJ L 78, 20.3.2013, p. 23).

42. Underlines that the persistent imbalances in the food supply chain, in which the position of primary producers is considerably weaker than that of other actors, should lead the Commission to take steps to improve the transparency of prices and margins in the food supply chain, thereby guaranteeing a fair price for the production and ensuring improvements in the income of small and medium farmers;
43. Draws attention to the threat factors weighing on numerous forest ecosystems, such as, among others, the spread of invasive alien species, pests (such as pine nematode and others) and forest fires; considers that sufficient financial resources should be addressed through community support programs and measures, to the evaluation of ecological and plant health of forests and their rehabilitation, including reforestation; notes that such resources are particularly important and urgent to some Member States, namely Portugal, Greece and Spain following multiple previous fires throughout those territories;

Heading 3 - Security and Citizenship

44. Reiterates its long-standing conviction that the Heading 3 ceiling has proven vastly insufficient to adequately fund the internal dimension of essential challenges related on the one hand to internal security and citizens' safety, and on the other hand to refugees and migrants;
45. Expects the pressure on those Member States' migration and asylum systems, as well as on their borders, to remain high in 2019, as in the years that will follow, and is therefore of the opinion that additional funding is needed in the field of refugees and migration, also in view of any future, unpredictable needs in that area; reinforces therefore the AMIF as regards supporting legal migration to the Union and promoting the effective integration of third-country nationals and enhancing fair and effective return strategies, in particular to support Member States in improving integration measures for refugees and migrants, especially children and unaccompanied minors;
46. Welcomes the increase in commitment appropriations for AMIF in order to finance the new Dublin II legislation (assuming it is adopted by the end of 2018) and rejects the Council's decision to move the corresponding appropriations into a reserve;
47. Underlines that internal security must remain one of the Union's main priorities and stresses the role of the Internal Security Fund (ISF) as the key financial instrument to support Member States in the area of security, including in the fight against terrorism and radicalisation, serious and organised crime and cybercrime; decides therefore to increase budgetary appropriations of the ISF, also to strengthen support for border management and to provide assistance for victims of terrorist acts;
48. Points out the essential role played by the Union agencies in the area of justice and home affairs in enhancing cooperation between Member States to address the concerns of Union citizens; decides to increase budgetary appropriations and staffing of EUROPOL, CEPOL, eu-LISA, Eurojust and for the EPPO;
49. Insists, in that context, that the EPPO be adequately financed and staffed; notes that in the 2019 DB, the Union contribution amounts to a total of EUR 4 911 000; points out that that appropriation is intended to cover the EPPO's staff-related expenditure, infrastructure, other administrative expenditure and operational expenditure; notes that

only 35 staff posts are provided for, which implies that after deducting the posts for 23 European Prosecutors, only 12 posts are foreseen for administrative tasks; considers that that is not realistic, in particular with regard to the two additional Member States that have recently decided to join the EPPO; decides, therefore, to frontload the staff increase foreseen for 2020, and to align the grading of the Chief Prosecutor and the European Prosecutors to those of OLAF's and Europol's management level;

50. Regrets Council's arbitrary cuts of more than EUR 35 million in commitment appropriations to numerous programmes in the areas of culture, citizenship, justice and public health, despite the excellent implementation rates of those programmes and the already insufficient levels of financing that leave many high-quality projects unfunded; restores all lines at least to the level of the draft budget while proposing additional increases to relevant lines;
51. Stresses the value of Creative Europe in supporting the Union's audio-visual and cultural sectors and insists that funding levels should match the ambitions of the programme; calls for an increase in committee appropriations for the MEDIA and the Culture sub-programmes, inter alia to tackle low application success rates; also increases appropriations for multimedia actions and for strengthening the financial capacity of SMEs in the European cultural and creative sectors;
52. Recalls its support for the rights, equality, citizenship and justice programmes; decides to increase commitment appropriations for instruments dealing with non-discrimination and equality in general, and specifically the Daphne programme, and to fight gender-based violence and enforce women's and LGBTQI+ rights;
53. Recalls that culture- and education-related projects are supported across a range of Union programmes and instruments, notably the ESI Funds, EFSI and Horizon 2020; urges the Commission to improve cross-programme synergies to deliver effective spending; calls on the Commission, in particular, to fully exploit potential synergies existing between various Union programmes – such as Horizon 2020, CEF, Erasmus+, EaSI, Creative Europe and COSME, EFSI and ESI Funds – to support more projects in the field of cultural and creative industries;
54. Reinforces Heading 3 by EUR 127,75 million in commitment appropriations with respect to the draft budget, excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions, and proposes to finance those reinforcements by a further mobilisation of special instruments;

Heading 4 – Global Europe

55. Stresses that the complex geopolitical challenges the Union is facing call urgently for a stronger Union external presence; emphasises once again that the Union's external action can only be credible if it is backed by sufficient financial resources; recalls that the funding needs greatly exceed the current size of Heading 4 and calls for appropriate room for manoeuvre in the event of unforeseen external crises;
56. Recalls that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has to cut across the Union's internal and external policies, whereas a special focus should be given to the provision of sufficient good-quality food, clean water and the building of additional wastewater disposal facilities in order to deliver on SDG 2 and 6;

furthermore, draws the attention to the scale and implications of energy poverty in developing countries and demands additional action to reduce energy poverty in line with SDG 7, in particular in remote rural areas in off-grid energy regions;

57. In that respect, reaffirms, in line with its position expressed in its abovementioned resolution of 5 July 2018, that the current ratio of contribution to the FRT from the Union budget (EUR 1 billion) and Member States (EUR 2 billion) should be maintained for the financing of the second tranche of the FRT; decides therefore to reduce the contributions of the Union budget from EUR 1,45 billion to EUR 450 million; believes that the difference should be instead financed by the bilateral contributions of Member States;
58. Believes that the promotion of peace, security and justice in developing countries is of paramount importance to addressing the root causes of migration and corresponding humanitarian challenges in the Southern Neighbourhood, such as Libya; underlines the importance of supporting good governance, democracy, the rule of law and vibrant civil society to effectively combat poverty over the long-term, and address the challenges of the climate change in developing countries; decides therefore to increase resources for the Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the Southern part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) under its various strands, to reflect also the considerable stress under which ENI will continue to be in 2019;
59. Recalls that the Union has committed to comprehensively protect and promote the rights of the child, girls and women as well as people with disabilities and special needs in its external policy; stresses the importance of implementing the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child in the European Union, the European Union Gender Action Plan and European Disability Policy in external relations; in that spirit, deems it appropriate to dedicate 10 % of the resources available under humanitarian aid to access to education in crisis areas;
60. Underscores the strategic importance of providing sufficient funding for the Western Balkans in order to consolidate their path towards accession; fails to understand the Council's proposal to cut the allocation for political reforms, as such reforms are the backbone of any democratic transformation; stresses the need for appropriate financial backing for the 2018-2020 Action Plan of the Western Balkan Strategy, and decides, consequently, to increase the allocation to the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) for the region;
61. Highlights that the situation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership represents also a significant challenge for the Union; is convinced of the importance of providing additional funding to support our neighbours' reform efforts, contribute to increasing resilience and fostering peace and improving day to day life of the citizens of those countries;
62. Calls for enhanced Union support to UNRWA, in line with its resolution of 8 February 2018¹, in view of the worsening situation on the ground and the decision of the United States to withdraw its annual contribution to the agency; specifies that the proposed increase is exclusively dedicated to UNRWA in order to compensate the relevant loss;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0042.

63. Is convinced of the potential of people-to-people contacts and youth mobility, also as one of the key strategies to enhance the impact of the Union external action and its visibility among the public of partner countries; decided therefore to reinforce the contributions from DCI, ENI, IPA II, and Partnership Instrument to Erasmus+;
64. In line with the principle of conditionality, supports a reduction in the amount allocated to Turkey in all budget lines, in view of the continuing backsliding on the rule of law, democracy and human rights; at the same time, deems it necessary to further strengthen the direct support to civil society, as well as people-to-people contacts;
65. Deems it necessary to increase appropriations for the Turkish Cypriot Community budget line for the purpose of contributing decisively to the continuation and intensification of the mission of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, the wellbeing of Maronites wishing to resettle and that of all enclaved persons as agreed in the 3rd Vienna Agreement, and of supporting the bicomunal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, thereby promoting trust and reconciliation between the two communities;
66. Acknowledges the moderate increase in funding for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) proposed by the Commission, while noting that the CFSP budget is still under heavy pressure, also considering the expansion of a number of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions risking to exacerbate the problem in 2019; reverses the reduction proposed by the Council for other crisis management measures and operations, which would result in less flexibility in dealing with unexpected crises;
67. As a result, decides to reverse almost all of the Council's cuts, to reinforce Heading 4 by EUR 425,4 million above the 2019 DB (excluding pilot projects and preparatory actions), while decreasing FRT and Turkey related lines and non restoring Council's cuts with a total effect of EUR -1,24 billion, thereby resulting in a net difference of EUR -819,1 million below the 2019 DB in Heading 4;

Heading 5 - Administration; Other headings - administrative and research support expenditure

68. Considers that Council's cuts are unjustified and do not reflect the real needs; restores therefore the 2019 DB for all Commission administrative expenditure, including administrative and research support expenditure in Headings 1 to 4;

Decentralised Agencies

69. Endorses, as a general rule, the Commission's estimates of the budgetary needs of agencies; considers, therefore, that any further cuts proposed by the Council would endanger the proper functioning of the agencies and would not allow them to fulfil the tasks they have been assigned; notes with particular irritation the arbitrary cut of merely EUR 10 000 to CEPOL and invites the Council to share with Parliament the substantial details on why it considers such cuts to be necessary and reasonable;
70. Notes that the fee-financing of agencies reduces the burden to the Union budget by EUR 1 billion annually; underlines that public tasks such as in the area of health, environment, or security and justice should always remain within the Union budget; believes however that the Commission should continue to address the risk of conflicts

of interest potentially arising in fee financed agencies and take adequate measures to avoid such conflicts;

71. Recalls the importance for the Union of focusing on competitiveness for growth and jobs; considers, in that context, that additional appropriation and staff are needed for the European GNSS Agency (GSA) and the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER); notes the creation of the European Labour Authority (ELA) and underlines the need to mobilise fresh resources for it; restores Council's substantial cuts to the appropriations for the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs), while putting parts of their appropriations into reserve pending progress on the ESAs' review;
72. In the context of the challenges the Union is still facing in terms of security, and bearing in mind the necessity for a coordinated European response, decides to reinforce the appropriations for the EUROPOL, eu-LISA, CEPOL, EUROJUST, EPPO, and the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA);
73. Expects the pressure on some Member States' migration and asylum systems, as well as on their borders, to remain high in 2019 and possibly escalate; stresses that the future need of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in terms of operational resources and staff will have to be closely monitored and possibly updated for the 2019 Budget; asks the Commission to provide an overview of the budgetary needs for the 2019 Budget for the proposed reforms of those agencies as soon as possible;
74. Highlights the need for an adequate level of financial appropriations for agencies which will be dealing with new additional tasks;
75. Reiterates its position that the 5 % staff reduction target has been successfully reached; expresses its intention to include a common statement by all institutions that confirms the end of that one-time exercise; considers that the new posts adopted in its position are needed to fulfil additional tasks due to new policy developments and new legislation;
76. Recalls that the Inter-Institutional Working Group on Decentralised Agencies' Resources 2 concluded its work by adopting recommendations on lessons learned from the approach to achieving the 5 % staff reduction target, the treatment of new tasks, evaluations of agencies, the sharing of services, the evaluation of agencies with multiple locations and the model for fee-financing agencies; welcomes the ratification of those recommendations by the institutions; expresses its intention to continue scrutinizing the Commission work on those recommendations in the future;

Pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs)

77. Recalls the importance of pilot projects and preparatory actions (PP-PAs) as tools for the formulation of political priorities and the introduction of new initiatives that have the potential to turn into standing Union activities and programmes; having carried out a careful analysis of all the proposals submitted and taking into account the Commission's assessment of their respect of legal requirements and implementability, decides to adopt a balanced package of PP-PAs that reflects Parliament's political priorities;
78. Welcomes the launch of Discover EU, the distribution of 15 000 InterRail tickets to 18-year-old Europeans in 2018, as well as the Commission proposal of EUR 700 million

for the MFF 2021-2027, which fits well with the Union's ambitions to promote learning mobility, active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity among all young people; decides to continue the relevant preparatory action in 2019 and is determined to continue it also in 2020;

Special instruments

79. Recalls the usefulness of special instruments to provide flexibility over and above the extremely tight ceilings of the current MFF and welcomes the improvements brought about by the mid-term revision of the MFF Regulation; calls for an extensive use of the Flexibility Instrument and the Global Margin for Commitments in the 2019 Budget in order to finance the wide range of new challenges and additional responsibilities that the Union budget is facing; recalls also the significance of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR) and the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF);

Payments

80. Reiterates its concerns that, despite recent catching-up, under-execution in payments has reached record low in the past three years, notably in subheading 1b; regrets that such delays prevent Union priorities and projects from delivering their full potential to citizens in a timely manner; points to the fact that, as a result, the 2019 DB leaves an unprecedented margin of EUR 19,3 billion below the payment ceiling; reinforces payment appropriations on those lines which are amended in commitment appropriations;

Other Sections

Section I - European Parliament

81. Maintains unchanged the overall level of its budget for 2019, in line with its abovementioned resolution on its estimates of revenue and expenditure adopted by the plenary on 19 April 2018, at EUR 1 999 144 000; incorporates budgetary-neutral technical adjustments to reflect updated information which was not available earlier this year;
82. Notes that the level of estimates for 2019 corresponds to 18,53 %, which is lower than that achieved in 2018 (18,85 %) and the lowest part of Heading 5 in more than fifteen years;
83. Notes that, due to the 2019 European Parliament elections, expenditure will be higher in some areas, in particular in respect of Members who are not re-elected and their assistants, whilst savings, albeit of a lesser magnitude, will be generated in other areas as a result of the reduction in the volume of parliamentary business in an election year;
84. Welcomes the fact that the 2019 Budget will include further instalments of substantial investments started back in 2016 with a view to significantly improving Parliament's security; points out that those projects cover various domains, mainly relating to buildings, such as the security upgrade of the entrance, equipment and staff, as the iPACS Project, but also improvements in the field of cyber-security and communication security;

85. Takes note of the Bureau decision to take into consideration two options for the PHS building: renovation or the rebuilding; urges the Secretary-General and the Bureau to provide the budgetary authority with a detailed budget for each of those options in addition to all technical specifications;
86. Reduces the establishment plan of its General Secretariat for 2019 by 59 posts (1 % staff reduction target), in accordance with the agreement of 14 November 2015 reached with the Council on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, in which Parliament's annual staff reduction measures are set to continue until 2019;
87. Considers that in its resolution of 18 April 2018 on the Integrity Policy of the Commission, Parliament expressed its concerns with regard to the appointment procedures for its senior officials, reiterates its call on the Commission to review before the end of 2018 its administrative procedure for the appointment of senior officials with the objective of fully ensuring that the best candidates are selected within a framework of maximum transparency and equal opportunities;
88. Notes the decision of the General Court of 25 September 2018 confirming Parliament's refusal to grant access to documents relating to MEPs' subsistence allowances, travel expenses and parliamentary assistance allowances (Judgment in Cases T-639/15 to T-666/15 Maria Psara and Others v Parliament and T-94/16 Gavin Sheridan v Parliament); reminds the Bureau that the plenary has appealed for greater transparency and an urgent need to audit the General Expenditure Allowance (GEA); welcomed, in this regard, the creation of an ad hoc working group for defining and publishing the rules concerning the use of the GEA; regrets, however, that based on the report of its working group the Bureau could only agree on a non-exhaustive list of eligible expenses, and on the need for each Member of Parliament to have a separate bank account dedicated to funds received as part of the GEA; reiterates its call on the Bureau to make the following additional changes concerning the GEA:
 - to require Members to keep all receipts pertaining to the GEA;
 - to require Members to return the unspent share of the GEA the end of their mandate;
89. Recalls Article 62 of the Decision of the Bureau of 19 May and 9 July 2008 concerning implementing measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament, which stipulates that "the sums paid", including the General Expenditure Allowance, "shall be reserved exclusively for the funding of activities linked to the exercise of a Member's mandate and may not be used to cover personal expenses or to fund grants or donations of a political nature" and that "Members shall pay back any unused amounts to Parliament"; calls upon the Secretary-General and the Bureau of the European Parliament to ensure that those provisions are fully implemented and complied with;
90. Recalls that on 23 October 1997, in its resolution on the general budget for 1998, Parliament called upon its Bureau to request the Court of Auditors to investigate Parliament's voluntary pension scheme, which led to the issuance of the Court of Auditor's opinion No 5/99 dated 16 June 1999 on the "Pension Fund and Scheme for Members of the European Parliament"; calls now on the Bureau to urgently request the

Court of Auditors to produce another such opinion on the pension scheme and fund in 2019;

91. Recalls that, in a note to the Bureau dated 8 March 2018, its Secretary-General accepted that the pension fund linked to the Members' voluntary pension scheme "will exhaust its capital well before the end of the pension obligations and possibly already by 2024"; calls therefore upon the Secretary-General and the Bureau, while respecting fully the Statute for Members, to urgently establish with the pension fund a clear plan for the Parliament assuming and taking over its obligations and responsibilities for its Member's voluntary pension scheme immediately after the 2019 elections;
92. Demands additional Union support for the parliamentary dimension of the WTO, in particular by an increased financial and personnel support to the responsible secretariat;
93. Calls for the upgrade of the European Science Media Hub, adopted in the 2018 Budget, and for cooperation with television stations, social media and further partners in order to establish training purposes for young journalists, especially in relation to new scientific and technological developments and to fact-based, peer-reviewed news;
94. Demands, for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of Parliament's resolution of 26 October 2017 on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the Union, further support to cover the cost of the external expertise needed to widen the external audit that has been implemented on the Advisory committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members, to the "Staff advisory committee for Parliament staff" on harassment prevention; also demands, for the same purpose, further support to cover the cost of additional staff competent to manage harassment cases within Parliament, gathering in a dedicated service staff with medical, psychological, legal, and human resources management background, and specific expertise in that field;
95. Recalls the 2014 ECA analysis which estimated the costs of the geographic dispersion of the Parliament to be EUR 114 million per year; furthermore, notes the finding from its resolution of 20 November 2013 on the location of the seats of the European Union's Institutions¹ that 78 % of all missions by Parliament statutory staff arise as a direct result of the Parliament's geographic dispersion; emphasises that the report also estimates the environmental impact of the geographic dispersion to be between 11 000 to 19 000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions; reiterates the negative public perception caused by that dispersion and calls therefore for a roadmap to a single seat and a reduction in the relevant budget lines;
96. Urges the Secretary-General to devise detailed arrangements for more sharing of back office functions and services between Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee;

Section IV - Court of Justice

97. Restores the 2019 DB on all budget items cut by the Council, which are essential to the functioning of the Court, and restores the estimates for two budget items in order to enhance the Court's ability to deal with increasingly high translation demands;

¹ OJ C 436, 24.11.2016, p. 2.

98. Restores the 16 posts and the related appropriations cut by the Commission in the 2019 DB to prevent any bottleneck that might be detrimental to the productivity of the courts in the context of new activities taken up by the Court and of continuous increase of the workload; considers that the creation of 16 new permanent posts for the support services, initially proposed by the Court and rejected by the Commission, should be granted;

Section V - Court of Auditors

99. Restores the 2019 DB on all items cut by Council, in order to implement the work programme of the Court of Auditors and to deliver the planned Audit Reports;

Section VI - European Economic and Social Committee

100. Restores the 2019 DB on all items cut by the Council;
101. Increases a number of lines above the 2019 DB in line with the European Economic and Social Committee's own estimates;

Section VII - Committee of the Regions

102. Restores the 2019 DB on all items cut by the Council;
103. Increases a number of lines above the 2019 DB in line with the Committee of the Region's own estimates;

Section VIII - European Ombudsman

104. Maintains unchanged the overall level of the Ombudsman's budget for 2019 as proposed by the Commission in the 2019 DB;

Section IX - European Data Protection Supervisor

105. Decides not to restore the 2019 DB in the line cut by the Council, due to a high increase of the total budget as compared to the previous year;

Section X - European External Action Service

106. Restores the 2019 DB on all lines cut by the Council;
107. Increases a number of lines above the 2019 DB in line with EEAS own estimates;
108. Reiterates Parliament's support to the Strategic Communication Capacity and reinforces it to deliver a stronger coordinated Union response to the challenge of disinformation;
109. Restores the 28 posts and related appropriations cut by the Council and adds a further five posts which constitute a moderate staff increase that is justified by the EEAS's significant new responsibilities, in particular those connected to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union, namely the creation of a new Union delegation in London and a new unit in the headquarters, and the adoption of a number of initiatives in the field of security and defence in recent months;

110. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, together with the amendments to the draft general budget, to the Council, the Commission, the other institutions and bodies concerned and the national parliaments.