



2024/2019(DEC)

21.11.2024

AMENDMENTS

1 - 25

Draft opinion

Romana Tomc

(PE765.076v01-00)

2023 discharge: General budget of the EU - Commission
(2024/2019(DEC))

Amendment 1

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 1

Draft opinion

1. Expresses its *satisfaction* that the Court of Auditors has declared that the consolidated accounts of the Union for the year 2023 present *fairly, in all material respects, the Union's financial position at this date*;

Amendment

1. Expresses its *dissatisfaction* that the Court of Auditors has declared that *the budget expenditure in* the consolidated accounts of the Union for the year 2023 present *illegal and/or irregular and/or not in line with the principles of sound financial management, with a special incidence in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) expenditure heading 2 'Cohesion, resilience and values', including energy efficiency in buildings*;

Or. en

Amendment 2

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 1 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

1 a. Observes that the level of error in MFF heading 2 'Cohesion, resilience and values' is 9.3% out of a total expenditure of €67 billion, that is, €6.2 billion, more than four times the materiality threshold, where the Court of Auditors has found 49 errors out of 238 transactions, numerous weaknesses and irregularities declared by beneficiaries;

Or. en

Amendment 3

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

**Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 b (new)**

Draft opinion

Amendment

1 b. Emphasises that a 2% materiality threshold can represent a significant financial amount, given the size of the General budget and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), including in headings related to employment and social matters; therefore, requests an analysis of the feasibility of applying a lower materiality threshold; warns that maintaining the 2% threshold without significant reduction undermines accountability and transparency; recommends that the report be signed by a physical person, in accordance with sound auditing practices, to ensure personal accountability and to enable European Parliament committees, including the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, to properly hold individuals accountable for the findings presented;

Or. en

**Amendment 4
Klára Dobrev, Marc Angel, Estelle Ceulemans, Alicia Homs Ginel, Isilda Gomes,
Romana Jerković, Idoia Mendia**

**Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 a (new)**

Draft opinion

Amendment

1 a. Recalls the importance to monitor the use of EU funds to ensure the protection of the EU's financial interests; calls on the Commission to make full use of the tools available to address the clear risk of a serious breach of the EU's values and the rule of law;

Or. en

Amendment 5

Klára Dobrev, Marc Angel, Estelle Ceulemans, Alicia Homs Ginel, Isilda Gomes, Romana Jerković, Idoia Mendia

Draft opinion

Paragraph 1 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

1 b. Recalls that spending under the subheading 2a “Economic, social and territorial cohesion” (Subheading 2a) focuses on reducing disparities between Member States and regions of the EU; stresses the importance of EU cohesion policy in supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EPSR Action Plan and its headline targets, provide an important contribution to the EU’s employment, social, education and skills policies, including structural reforms in these areas; stresses in this regard especially the importance of ESF+ and expresses the need to provide it with the continued financial and political support of the EU, national and regional institutions in the delivery of its objectives and targets in the years to come;

Or. en

Amendment 6

Klára Dobrev, Marc Angel, Estelle Ceulemans, Alicia Homs Ginel, Isilda Gomes, Romana Jerković, Idoia Mendia

Draft opinion

Paragraph 1 c (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

1 c. Welcomes the launch of the European Year of Skills on 9 May 2023 with the aim to boost the competitiveness of Union undertakings, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises

(SMEs), and to contribute to the creation of quality jobs, with a view to realising the full potential of the green and digital transitions in a socially fair, inclusive and just manner, thereby promoting equal access to skills development and reducing inequalities and segregation in education and training and contributing to continuous learning and career progression, empowering people to access quality jobs and to fully participate in the economy and society;

Or. en

Amendment 7

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 2

Draft opinion

2. Observes that the total outstanding commitments reached a record high of EUR 543 billion by the end of 2023, mainly due to an increased commitment of shared management funds, as well as NextGenerationEU (NGEU), **but notices** that the ***total outstanding commitments are expected to decrease*** in the ***2024-2026 period***;

Amendment

2. Observes that the total outstanding commitments reached a record high of EUR 543 billion by the end of 2023, mainly due to an increased commitment of shared management funds, as well as NextGenerationEU (NGEU), **warns** that the ***European Commission has not addressed research and development (R&D) policies*** in the ***European Semester, despite the NGEU opportunity to boost investments in research and development to 3% of GDP in each Member State***;

Or. en

Amendment 8

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 2

Draft opinion

Amendment

2. **Observes** that the total outstanding commitments reached a record high of EUR 543 billion by the end of 2023, mainly due to an increased commitment of shared management funds, as well as NextGenerationEU (NGEU), but notices that the total outstanding commitments are expected to decrease in the 2024-2026 period;

2. **Is concerned** that the total outstanding commitments reached a record high of EUR 543 billion by the end of 2023, mainly due to an increased commitment of shared management funds, as well as NextGenerationEU (NGEU), but notices that the total outstanding commitments are expected to decrease in the 2024-2026 period;

Or. en

Amendment 9

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 2 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

2 a. Warns that the European Commission has not provided assurance that Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) expenditure complies with EU and national rules; observes that seven out of the 23 RRF payments to member states are affected by quantitative findings, as well as payments for which no essential documentation was provided in MFF heading 2 ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’, to a level which is more than double than in 2022; warns that the European Commission has not provided assurance that Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) expenditure complies with EU and national rules; observes that seven out of the 23 RRF payments to member states are affected by quantitative findings, as well as payments for which no essential documentation was provided in MFF heading 2 ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’, to a level which is more than double than in 2022;

Or. en

Amendment 10

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 3

Draft opinion

3. Notes with **concerns** that the Court of Auditors estimates that the level of error for MFF heading 2 ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’ in 2023 reached 9,3 %, compared with 6,4 % in 2022; recognises that the majority of spending in this area is deemed high-risk expenditure as mainly reimbursement-based and often subject to complex rules; ***calls for urgent action to decrease the error rate in the future;***

Amendment

3. Notes with **concern** that the Court of Auditors estimates that the level of error for MFF heading 2 ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’ in 2023 reached 9,3 %, compared with 6,4 % in 2022, ***significantly above the already high rates of previous years, resulting in the Court issuing an adverse opinion on the legality and regularity of budget expenditure;*** recognises that the majority of spending in this area is deemed high-risk expenditure as mainly reimbursement-based and often subject to complex rules; ***notes the main types of error quantified were ineligible projects and costs, non-compliance with public procurement or state aid rules, and absence of essential documents;***

Or. en

Amendment 11

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 3 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

3 a. Calls for urgent action to decrease the error rate in the future especially for the new funding period, and notes the Court’s observation that the complexity of the way funds are disbursed has an impact on the risk of error; further calls on the Commission to assist the agencies to improve their internal procedures in order to ensure compliance with applicable public procurement and state aid rules;

Amendment 12

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 3 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

3 a. Warns that the European Commission's estimate of error for expenditure is significantly outside the range of the Court of Auditors' confidence interval, particularly in MFF heading 2 'Cohesion, resilience and values';

Or. en

Amendment 13

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 3 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

3 b. Notes however that the Court recognises several factors which put additional pressure on Member State administrations and increased the risk regarding their capacity to ensure spending was regular and in line with the principles of sound financial management; recalls these factors include the significant additional REACT-EU resources being made available, and the end date of 31 December 2023 for the 2014-2020 cohesion eligibility period, which for the last few years overlaps with the eligibility period of the RRF;

Or. en

Amendment 14

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Expresses concerns *that the Commission forecast decommitments for cohesion policy funds, including the European Social Fund Plus, at EUR 2,2 billion for the 2024-2027 period, five times higher its 2022 forecast, mainly due to persistent low absorption;*

Amendment

4. Expresses concerns *about the limitations of the Commission's and Member States' ex post checks within the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), particularly under Heading 2, 'Cohesion, Resilience and Values.'*

Or. en

Amendment 15

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Expresses concerns that the Commission forecast decommitments for cohesion policy funds, including the European Social Fund Plus, at EUR 2,2 billion for the 2024-2027 period, five times higher its 2022 forecast, mainly due to persistent low absorption;

Amendment

4. Expresses concerns that the Commission forecast decommitments for cohesion policy funds, including the European Social Fund Plus, at EUR 2,2 billion for the 2024-2027 period, five times higher its 2022 forecast, mainly due to persistent low absorption; *stresses the Commission should identify ways to help Member States accelerate the use of EU funds, in particular shared management funds under the Common Provisions Regulation to improve absorption, while respecting sound financial management;*

Or. en

Amendment 16

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 a. Recalls the importance of the ESF+ which aims to achieve high employment, fair social protection, a skilled and resilient workforce, and inclusive/cohesive societies as key in eradicating poverty; underlines the importance of closely involving regional actors, in particular civil society organisations and social partners working on the ground in the implementation of ESF+ funded activities;

Or. en

Amendment 17

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 a. Warns that competition in public procurement has decreased, due to the fact that procurement procedures have not been simplified and shortened;

Or. en

Amendment 18

Irena Joveva, Hristo Petrov, Brigitte van den Berg, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Draft opinion

Paragraph 4 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 b. Notes the Court issued a qualified opinion on the legality and regularity of RRF expenditure due to weaknesses in the design of measures and cases of vaguely defined milestones/targets

contributing to a more discretionary assessment and persistent weaknesses in the Member States' reporting and control systems;

Or. en

Amendment 19

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion Paragraph 5

Draft opinion

5. Notes that high inflation (6,4 %) continued to affect the Union budget; warns that, based on the Commission's inflation forecast, the Union budget could lose about 13 % of its purchasing power by end of 2025;

Amendment

5. Notes that high inflation (6,4 %) continued to affect the Union budget; warns that, based on the Commission's inflation forecast, the Union budget could lose about 13 % of its purchasing power by end of 2025; *warns that EU debt from borrowing increased in 2023, particularly for funding for NGEU, while the bulk of repayment is deferred to future MFFs;*

Or. en

Amendment 20

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion Paragraph 5 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 a. Notes the limitation in the European Commission's annual activity report, which lacks conclusions on the effectiveness of Member State controls over RRF funds; calls for a comprehensive reliability statement from the Commission, based on a thorough assessment of control mechanisms at both EU and national levels, to provide European taxpayers with full assurance that RRF expenditures including in social

*affairs are in compliance with EU rules;
demands enhanced transparency from the
Commission and improvements in control
systems to safeguard the financial
integrity of EU recovery funds;*

Or. en

Amendment 21
João Oliveira

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 a. *Calls on the Commission to bring
canteen, cleaning and crèche staff in-
house, ensuring good working conditions
and contractual stability;*

Or. pt

Amendment 22
Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 b. *Warns that EU debt repayment
from higher borrowing in 2023 relies on
higher taxes on company profits;*

Or. en

Amendment 23
Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion
Paragraph 6 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

6 a. *Recalls that the estimate of error in MFF expenditure has increased from 2022 to 2023 by 33%, mainly due to the increase in MFF heading 2 ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’;*

Or. en

Amendment 24

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 6 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

6 b. *Concludes that the European Commission merely correlates spending in MFF heading 2 ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’ to a reduction of unemployment in Central and Eastern Europe, but fails to do it in the rest of the Union; warns that the European Commission completely fails to justify how the expenditure on the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) contributes effectively to a reduction of employment in the youth;*

Or. en

Amendment 25

Rachel Blom, Nikola Bartůšek, Mélanie Disdier, Marie Dauchy

Draft opinion

Paragraph 6 c (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

6 c. *Emphasizes the importance of a rigorous planning and control cycle for EU agencies, whereby the outcomes and evaluations of expenditures are carefully considered in the budgeting process; aims*

to ensure a realistic and accountable budget based on demonstrated results and performance; therefore urges the European Commission to use the annual report of the European Court of Auditors as input for establishing the budget of the EU agencies, and requests that the available budget not be increased until identified shortcomings are fully addressed;

Or. en