12. Reiterates its support for the Commission's legislative proposals on the own-resources package, including a binding roadmap; considers, furthermore, that in the event that the Council waters down these proposals so that they do not result in a significant decrease in the Member States' GNI-based contributions to the EU budget, the Commission should come forward with additional proposals on the introduction of new genuine own resources; insists that revenues from the Financial Transaction Tax should be allocated at least partly to the EU budget as a genuine own resource;

13. Insists that the principle of the unity of the EU budget be recalled and clearly defined in the Interinstitutional Agreement; believes that all expenditure and revenue resulting from decisions taken by, or in the name of, the EU institutions, including borrowing, lending and loan guarantee operations, must be summarised in a document annexed every year to the Draft Budget, providing an overall view of the financial and budgetary consequences of Union activities; expects that this will ensure full information for citizens and adequate parliamentary control;

14. Stresses that, in parallel with the MFF negotiations, Parliament and the Council should accelerate their negotiations on the specific legal bases of the EU programmes and policies for the period 2014-2020; underlines the fact that the negotiations on the MFF/IIA and the EU multiannual programmes constitute a single package, and reaffirms the principle that 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed';

15. Recalls that if no MFF has been adopted by the end of 2013, the ceilings and other provisions corresponding to 2013 will be extended until such time as a new MFF is adopted; signals that, in this case, it would be ready to reach a swift agreement with the Council and Commission to adapt the internal structure of the MFF to reflect the Union's political priorities, and to ensure that the appropriate legal bases are in place for all EU policies and programmes by 2014;

16. Believes, given the crucial importance of any vote on the MFF, and in order to enable MEPs to be held accountable by their electors in the European Parliament elections in 2014, that any vote on the MFF should be held in an open and transparent manner;

17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the other institutions and bodies concerned.

P7_TA(2013)0081

Guidelines for the 2014 budget — Section III

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2013 on the general guidelines for the preparation of the 2014 budget, Section III — Commission (2013/2010(BUD))

(2016/C 036/08)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Articles 312, 313 and 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,

— having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (IIA) ([1]),

— 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 1605/2002 ([2]),

— having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2012 on the new draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013 ([3]),

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([1]) OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1.
([2]) OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.
([3]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0486.

— having regard to the European Union's general budget for the 2013 financial year [1] and to the three related joint statements agreed between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission,

— having regard to Title II, Chapter 7 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 29 June 2012 and 19 October 2012 on the Compact for Growth and Jobs,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A7-0043/2013),

A. whereas the Treaty of Lisbon confers significant new prerogatives on the European Union in fields such as external action, sport, space, climate change, energy, tourism and civil protection;

B. whereas pursuant to Article 312 of the Treaty of Lisbon, the multiannual financial framework is enshrined in the Treaty and shall be agreed in the form of a Council regulation, adopted by the Council by unanimity after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament by a majority of its component members;

C. whereas the current multiannual financial framework ends at the end of 2013 and whereas 2014 should be the first year of implementation of the next multiannual financial framework;

D. whereas 2013 will be the first year of implementation of the new Regulation on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union;

General context

1. Takes note of the European Council conclusions of 8 February 2013 on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF); insists that if the European Parliament has not yet given its consent to the new MFF Regulation, the European Commission should first draw up the Draft Budget for 2014 on the basis of its own proposals on the MFF 2014-2020, and then if no agreement is reached on a new MFF it should adjust its proposal according to Article 312(4) of the Treaty and Article 30 of the current Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management;

2. Recalls that in the event of no agreement on the next MFF Regulation by the end of this year, Article 312(2), according to which the MFF regulation is adopted by the Council only after the European Parliament has given its consent, Article 312 (4) which foresees the application of the ceilings of the last year of the current MFF in case no agreement on the next MFF is reached in due time and Article 30 of the current inter-institutional agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management will apply, which means a prolongation of the 2013 ceilings, adjusted with a 2 % fixed deflator a year, until adoption of a new MFF regulation; reiterates, in this eventuality, its readiness to reach a swift agreement with the Council and the Commission on ensuring that legal bases are in force for the implementation of EU programmes and policies in 2014;

3. Acknowledges the difficulty in defining general guidelines on the 2014 budget while there is much uncertainty as to the level of the 2014 commitment ceiling; underlines that this could range from EUR 142,540 billion in 2014 prices — if the MFF 2014-2020 were to be agreed on the basis of the European Council's conclusions dated 7—8 February 2013 — to EUR 155,5 billion in 2014 prices in case of prolongation of the 2013 ceiling;

4. Notes that the economic and financial crisis has created a consensus among European political leaders in favour of greater economic, fiscal, financial and banking integration as well as better governance, and has shown the need to stimulate growth in order to restore public finances; underlines that a reduced European budget would be in contradiction with these political aims;

A sufficient and realistic level of payments

5. Is of the opinion that budgeting a sufficient and realistic level of payments at the beginning of the budgetary cycle would avoid unnecessary complications during the implementation of the budget, as witnessed in particular with the 2012 budget;

[1] OJ L 66, 8.3.2013.

6. Recalls that, due to the intransigent position of the Council in the negotiations, the overall level of payments set in the 2013 budget is EUR 5 billion lower than the Commission's estimates for payment needs in the draft budget; underlines that the Commission's proposal was based on a revision downwards of the 2013 forecasts provided by Member States themselves and on the assumption that all payment claims to be received in 2012 would be paid out of the 2012 budget; is therefore extremely worried about the level of payments in the 2013 budget and points out that this level of appropriations will be insufficient to cover actual payment needs in 2013 as the margin of payments left below the MFF payments ceiling in the 2013 budget amounts to EUR 11,2 billion while the carryover alone of additional payment needs from 2012 is over EUR 16 billion; warns that continued and excessive deferral of payments on an annual basis will create significant problems for future years;

7. Attaches the greatest political importance to the joint statements signed by Parliament, the Council and the Commission at their highest political level in December 2012, which are an integral part of the agreement between the two arms of the budgetary authority on the 2013 budget and according to which the necessary additional payment appropriations shall be provided to the EU budget in 2013 in order for the Union to be able to pay its bills and preserve its political credibility and its solvency;

8. Recalls that, in line with the provisions of the joint statement on payments 2012, the Commission shall present at an early stage in 2013 a draft amending budget devoted to the sole purpose of covering the suspended claims from 2012, amounting to EUR 2,9 billion, and other pending legal obligations, without prejudice to the proper implementation of the 2013 budget; recalls that in November and December 2012 additional payment requests under shared management for an overall amount of around EUR 16 billion were submitted to the Commission, which will need to be paid out in 2013; therefore urges the Commission to submit this draft amending budget without any delay and at the latest by the end of March 2013, in order to avoid any interference with the budget 2014 procedure;

9. Further calls on the Commission and the Council to work constructively, together with Parliament, to avoid any repetition of this situation in future budget cycles by improving forecasting accuracy and agreeing on realistic and sufficient budget estimates which should include clear and detailed information on the nature of all payment estimates;

10. In this respect, calls again on the Commission to provide monthly reports to Parliament and the Council on the evolution of Member States' payment claims for the structural funds, cohesion fund, rural development and fisheries funds (breakdown per Member State and per fund). The information provided by these monthly reports should be the basis for monitoring the fulfilment of commitments agreed upon between the institutions;

11. Urges also that an interinstitutional working group on payments be set up as soon as possible, building on the experience of the interinstitutional meetings on payments that were organised in the context of the 2013 budgetary procedure; firmly believes that such meetings at political level are instrumental in avoiding any possible misunderstanding as to the accuracy of figures and estimates regarding payment needs; believes in particular that this working group should address as a matter of priority the question of the gap between forecasts provided by Member States' authorities for shared management expenditures and the level of payment appropriations that the Council is collectively imposing in the course of the budget negotiations; calls for the first interinstitutional meeting on payments to take place in the first semester of 2013;

12. Is deeply concerned that, despite the payment implementation level being 99 % at the end of 2012, the stock of outstanding commitments (RALs, or *restes à liquider*) has increased over the past year by EUR 10 billion to now reach the unprecedented level of EUR 217,3 billion; expects that the level of RAL might even be higher by the end of 2013; warns against applying the automatic de-commitment rule too rigorously as a way of solving the RAL problem as this would run counter to the Compact for Growth and Jobs agreed by the European Council in 2012; considers that this year interinstitutional meetings on payments should closely examine the difference between commitment and payment appropriations, establish a dialogue with the Commission in order to fully clarify the composition of RAL and assess whether the current peak in RAL is primarily due to the economic crisis or whether it indicates wider structural problems; in the event of the latter conclusion, calls on the institutions to work together and adopt an appropriate plan of action in order to address the issue of the unprecedented level of RAL during the next MFF; insists that the Council refrain from deciding a priori the level of payments, without taking account of actual needs and legal obligations; notes further that accruing RAL actually undermines a transparent EU budget in which the relation between commitments and payments in any specific budgetary year is clearly visible;

13. Recalls that 2014 is a year of transition between two multiannual financial frameworks and expects the Commission to accompany its financial programming for 2014 with a thorough and realistic assessment of the level of appropriations, keeping in mind that even if the multiannual financial programme has a slower path of implementation in a starting year than at the end, and that consequently, the level of payments needs is usually lower at the beginning of the multiannual financial period than at the end, the question of the RAL at the end of 2013 will have to be addressed as a matter of urgency;

14. Urges the Commission, when adopting its draft budget for 2014, to provide clear and factual evidence of the link between the level of appropriations it proposes and the implementation of the Growth and Jobs Compact adopted by the June 2012 European Council; asks the institutions to improve the existing provisions for certain Member States which are particularly suffering from the financial crisis, in order to further improve their capacity to absorb structural and cohesion funds and prevent the anticipated huge decommitments;

15. Insists that the 2013 budget negotiations have demonstrated once more that the system of financing the EU budget — with national contributions amounting to more than 75 % of EU revenue — is in contradiction with the letter and the spirit of the Treaty, and is putting the EU budget in a position of total dependency on national treasuries, which can be particularly detrimental at a time of national budgetary constraints; urges that the structure of Union revenue be reformed to include the introduction of new and genuine own resources, like the financial transaction tax and the new EU VAT; recalls its support to the Commission proposal for reforming the own resources system;

The role of the EU budget in implementing the EU 2020 strategy and in creating economic growth and jobs

16. Recalls that 2014 is scheduled to be the first year of implementation of the new MFF and is therefore important for the successful start of the new programming period; is of the opinion that the priority of the European budget in 2014 should be to sustain economic growth and competitiveness, boost employment and fight against youth unemployment;

17. Recalls the particular nature of the EU budget, which amounts to only 1 % of the EU GDP and is an investment budget with a strong leverage effect; underlines that 94 % of it goes back to the Member States and European citizens through its policies and programmes, and therefore should not be seen as an additional burden but as a tool to boost investment, growth and jobs in Europe; emphasises that, for the regions and Member States, public investment would be minimised or impossible without the contribution of the EU budget; believes that any decrease in the EU budget would inevitably increase imbalances and hamper the growth and competitive strength of the entire Union economy, as well as its cohesiveness, and would undermine the principle of solidarity as a core EU value; is of the opinion that the demand for 'more Europe' is meaningless when it is accompanied by proposals for the drastic reduction of EU funds;

18. Acknowledges the persistent economic and budgetary constraints at national level, and the fiscal consolidation efforts undertaken by the Member States; underlines, however, that the EU budget is an effective tool for investment and solidarity with proven added value at both European and national level; is convinced that the budget's ability to trigger economic growth, competitiveness and job creation is even more important in times of economic difficulty as it will create the conditions for the success of these consolidation efforts and that the EU budget should be seen as an instrument to exit the crisis;

19. Emphasises the need to enhance financial support and activities as regards the introduction of quality education systems that combine practical training with vocational education; asks for stronger support for cooperation between Member States in the field of vocational education in order to combat youth unemployment effectively; recalls, in this regard, the proposal for a Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee [1];

20. Recalls that all the macroeconomic financial stabilisation measures taken since 2008 have not yet brought an end to the economic and financial crisis; believes, therefore, that in order to return to growth and generate employment in Europe, Member States should continue their efforts to unlock their potential for sustainable and inclusive growth, for instance

(1) COM(2012)0729 final.

through the promotion of education, lifelong learning and mobility; a well targeted, robust and sufficient EU budget must be part of the solution and is needed to further help coordinate and enhance the national efforts;

21. Calls, therefore, on the Member States to consider synergies between the national consolidation effort and the added value of a well-prioritised EU budget, allowing the implementation of the political commitments already made at the highest level; recalls that implementation of political commitments and priorities is much more effective when there is a synergy between national and EU budgets and underlines the importance of inter-parliamentary debates on the common economic and budgetary orientations of the Member States and of the Union, within the framework of European Parliamentary Week on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination;

22. Invites the Commission when presenting its Draft Budget for 2014 to properly address the role of the EU budget in the European Semester process; calls, in particular, on the Commission to provide factual and concrete data on how its proposed draft EU budget can actually play a triggering, catalytic, synergetic and complementary role to investments at local, regional and national levels to implement the priorities agreed in the framework of the European semester;

23 Considers that most of the time EU expenditure has the potential for creating economies of scale and should automatically lead to an assessment of possible savings at national level, which would significantly alleviate Member States' public finances;

24. Emphases the need to take advantage of all tools and actions at the disposal of the European Union to help Member States emerge from the crisis and to prevent future ones; highlights the crucial role played by the three European supervisory authorities in enabling comprehensive delivery of the financial regulation agenda and supervisory structures; calls on the Commission to propose sufficient funding for these three agencies in its 2014 draft budget and to foresee, when preparing the assessment and a revision of the regulations for January 2014, a revised funding model for these agencies that will increase their independence, while safeguarding the unity of the EU budget;

25. Highlights the strategic effect of the choice of priorities for 2014, as the first year of the coming MFF; emphasises the urgent need for the EU to foster growth and competitiveness, with the objective of creating jobs and opportunities, in particular for young people;

26. Recalls, in this regard, that the EU 2020 strategy should be at the heart of the next MFF (2014 — 2020) and urges the Commission to prioritise and clearly demonstrate all related investments in the 2014 budget, placing emphasis on investments in the fields of the knowledge triangle (education, research innovation), infrastructures, SMEs, renewable energy, sustainable development, entrepreneurship, employment — in particular youth employment — and skills, as well as the strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion;

27. Deplores the Council's usual horizontal cuts and warns it against the temptation to again make use of such artificial cuts; will pay particular attention to ensure a sufficient level of payments for policies and programmes fostering growth and competitiveness;

28. Intends to continue a close examination of the Commission's intention of reducing the staffing level in EU institutions and recalls that this is to be seen as an overall goal; notes the adverse impact such measures may have on the swift, regular and effective implementation of EU actions and programmes; is of the opinion that the efficiency of the administration must be secured and even strengthened; considers that any short-term or long-term revision in staff should be based on a prior impact assessment and should take full account of, inter alia, the Union's legal obligations and the institutions' new competences and increased tasks arising from the Treaties; recalls the Joint Statement on decentralised agencies, in particular the annexed common approach and its stipulations on agencies being entrusted with new tasks;

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29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors.