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P9_TA(2020)0166

Guidelines for the 2021 Budget — Section III**European Parliament resolution of 19 June 2020 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2021 budget, Section III — Commission (2019/2213(BUD))**

(2021/C 362/44)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of 8 October 2018 on Global Warming of 1,5 °C ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,
- 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 966/2012 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽³⁾,
- 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 management ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to Council Decision 2014/335/EU, Euratom of 26 May 2014 on the system of own resources of the European Union ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020 ⁽⁶⁾ and the joint statements agreed between Parliament, the Council and the Commission annexed thereto,
- having regard to its interim report of 14 November 2018 on the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 — Parliament's position with a view to an agreement ⁽⁷⁾ and to its resolution of 10 October 2019 on the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and own resources: time to meet citizens' expectations ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences ⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 May 2020 on a safety net to protect the beneficiaries of Union programmes: setting up an MFF contingency plan ⁽¹⁰⁾,

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

⁽²⁾ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 168, 7.6.2014, p. 105.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 057, 27.2.2020, p. 1.

⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0449.

⁽⁸⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0032.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0054.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0065.

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- having regard to its resolution of 15 May 2020 on the new multiannual financial framework, own resources and the recovery plan ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, and its resolution thereon of 19 January 2017 ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 February 2020 on the 2021 budget guidelines (06092/2020),
 - having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
 - having regard to Rule 93 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,
 - having regard to the position in the form of amendments of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
 - having regard to the letters from the Committee on Development; the Committee on Budgetary Control; the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety; the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy; the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection; the Committee on Transport and Tourism; the Committee on Regional Development; the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development; the Committee on Culture and Education; the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A9-0110/2020),
- A. whereas the European Union is facing an unexpected and unprecedented health, economic, social and environmental crisis due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic;
- B. whereas these exceptional circumstances cannot be tackled with a budget designed for 'business as usual';
- C. whereas pursuant to Article 311 of the TFEU, the Union shall provide itself with the means necessary to attain its policy objectives and the budget shall be financed wholly from own resources;
- D. whereas pursuant to Article 312 of the TFEU, the multiannual financial framework (MFF) shall be adopted by the Council by unanimity after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament by a majority of its component members;
- E. whereas the current MFF ends at the end of 2020, and whereas 2021 should be the first year of implementation of the next one in a revised and reshaped form;
- F. whereas Parliament has been ready to negotiate the MFF since November 2018, but the Council has so far failed to engage in any meaningful talks with Parliament beyond minimal contact on the margins of the General Affairs Council; whereas the timeframe for reaching an agreement in the European Council has been repeatedly extended;
- G. whereas on 27 May 2020, the Commission presented an updated proposal for the next MFF;
- H. whereas IPCC scientists, in their latest report, call for radical action to catch up with the ecological transition, in the light of their warning that CO₂ concentration increased three times faster in 2018-2019 than in the 1960s, underlining the fact that there are only a few years left to prevent climate change and its environmental impact from getting irreversibly out of control;
- I. whereas in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, victims of gender-based violence can be exposed to abusers for long periods of time and be cut off from social and institutional support, as demonstrated by the data in several EU countries, and whereas women are disproportionately represented in professions where the risk of getting infected is high;

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0124.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0015.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 242, 10.7.2018, p. 24.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.

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1. Insists that the EU budget is vital to respond to the challenges faced by the Union and made even more visible and acute by the COVID-19 crisis, and that it needs to reflect the degree of ambition of the Member States and the institutions; stresses, therefore, that the primary focus of the 2021 budget should be to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and support the recovery, built on the European Green Deal and digital transformation;
2. Emphasises that the Union and all of its Member States must show full solidarity with those most in need, pulling together as a community and ensuring that no country is left to fight this pandemic and its aftermath on its own, including through a 2021 budget commensurate with this historical challenge;
3. Highlights, in this context, that the 2021 budget should be the first of an updated, reoriented and very ambitious 2021-2027 MFF;
4. In line with its resolution of 13 May 2020, reiterates its request that the Commission propose an MFF contingency plan by 15 June 2020, on the basis of the automatic extension of the 2020 ceilings, in order to protect beneficiaries of EU programmes and ensure continuity of funding; stresses that this MFF contingency plan should allow for the prolongation of existing EU programmes and their refocusing on addressing the consequences of the crisis, as well as for setting up the most urgent new instruments and initiatives; underlines the need to avoid any risk of discontinuity or a disorderly extension of the current MFF and programmes in 2021, and to guarantee that the Union will be enabled to carry out its operations and to provide an ambitious crisis response and recovery strategy;
5. Underlines that no Member State on its own will be able to finance a massive recovery plan, as long as needed, to face the COVID-19 crisis and that, if financed solely with debt, national recovery plans would be very limited in amount and duration; insists that the recovery plan must comprise a massive investment component financed by the Union budget as of 2021, and calls, therefore, for the 2021 budget to be an important part of this recovery plan;
6. Believes that the recovery plan needs to be built on the European Green Deal and digital transformation of our societies to rebuild our economy, ensure resilience and inclusion, while respecting planetary boundaries, protect people's wellbeing and health from further risks and environmental impacts, create high-quality jobs and ensure social, economic and territorial cohesion and convergence, notably through investment in SMEs and the sectors most affected by the crisis such as tourism, and in the development of sustainable public infrastructure and services and of the strategic sectors, such as the health sector, that tackle the crisis on the front line; calls on the Commission to introduce a draft 2021 budget that is in line with these priorities;
7. Considers that the EU budget's revenue side must be seen as a tool for the achievement of EU policies; underlines that, in order to cover supplementary expenditure incurred by the crisis and to mitigate the predominance of the GNI contributions in the EU budget, new additional own resources flowing directly into the EU budget as general revenue will need to play a key role as of 2021; considers that the absence of fresh new own resources will have negative political consequences on the 2021 Union budget and jeopardise the new political agenda of the Commission; considers, in this context, the Commission's proposals on own resources from May 2018 as a good starting point that needs to be broadly deepened in the light of the current challenges and crisis; recalls, as expressed in its interim report of 14 November 2018 and its resolution of 10 October 2019, that the European Parliament will not give its consent to the 2021-2027 MFF without an agreement on the reform of the EU own resources system, including the introduction of a basket of new own resources;
8. Is convinced that the current crisis should not undermine the ambition of moving towards the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, requiring a cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 55 % compared with 1990 levels by 2030; recalls that the 2019 Emissions Gap Report of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) calls for a global reduction of greenhouse gases of 7,6 % each year to limit the temperature rise to under 1,5 °C, meaning a reduction of approximately 6,8 % each year at EU level; highlights that it represents an enormous challenge, notably with regard to the much-needed sustainable, socially just transition, which should take into account the different starting points of the EU regions and Member States and be accompanied by job creation on a massive scale; insists that in order to succeed in this unprecedented challenge in only ten years, urgent action is needed, backed by a strong EU budget as of 2021;

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9. Is concerned about further economic, social and political consequences of the crisis if the EU does not equip itself quickly with new and efficient tools to protect social cohesion, preserve jobs and prevent massive layoffs; welcomes, in this context, the proposal for a Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) programme and the commitment by the President of the Commission to present a legislative proposal for a European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance scheme with a view to implementing it as soon as possible;

...in order to provide solutions to exacerbated social, environmental, economic and financial challenges

10. Welcomes the Commission's proposals for the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan;

11. Notes, however, that in order to attain the 40 % greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target by 2030, and the upcoming raising of this ambition, the Commission has estimated that it will be necessary to bridge a funding gap of at least EUR 260 billion every year plus additional costs for environmental protection, resource management and social adaptation measures; believes that in order to help reduce the EU's GHG emissions and overall carbon footprint, a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) and EU climate law should fully contribute to a quantum leap in political and financial efforts; considers that a just transition, as an inherent part of the answer to the crisis, requires just and adequate funding;

12. Reiterates that Parliament's mandate for the MFF was set in its interim report of 14 November 2018 on ceilings, programme allocations, own resources and flexibility provisions, the mid-term revision and horizontal principles, such as mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate and gender equality; notes that the outcome of the MFF negotiations will largely determine the funding level of EU programmes for the next period and reiterates its position that commitment appropriations for the 2021-2027 period should be set at EUR 1 324,1 billion in 2018 prices, which would represent 1,3 % of the EU-27's gross national income (GNI); reflecting this position, is determined to defend a 2021 budget of EUR 192,1 billion in current prices in commitment appropriations; underlines that major additional appropriations on top of this position are required to respond to the ongoing crisis;

13. Recalls its position that the 2021-2027 MFF climate and biodiversity mainstreaming targets must go beyond the levels of targeted spending shares as set out in its interim report; aims, therefore, to achieve a biodiversity spending level of 10 % and a climate mainstreaming spending level of 30 % for 2021; reiterates its call on the Commission to lay down clear eligibility criteria for a new stringent and comprehensive methodology, in the form of a Framework Regulation, for defining and tracking relevant climate and biodiversity expenditure in line with the 'do no harm' principle, together with the corresponding correction measures, where relevant, and the proofing mechanism to identify potential harmful impacts of EU actions on biodiversity and climate in keeping with its commitments under the Paris Agreement and its call for a progressive phase-out of direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies;

14. Supports the mobilisations of funds and the flexibility to mobilise funds for research and development (R&D) to COVID-19-related measures such as the development of vaccines, new treatments, diagnostic tests and medical systems to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and save lives;

15. Strongly underlines that the Union's climate goals require sustainable and long-term solutions; highlights the paramount role of R&D in finding effective, realistic and implementable solutions for citizens, businesses and society; underlines that Horizon Europe will be the main programme for developing new solutions for the climate; requests increased funding for all contributing R&D programmes in order to establish the Union as a global leader for green technologies and strengthen its global competitiveness on a greater scale, to reduce its dependency on foreign key technologies, to become a leader in information and communication technologies (ICTs), artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity, to develop new treatments for serious diseases such as cancer, and to build up supercomputing and data processing capacities;

16. Notes with great concern that many excellent proposals for research cannot be implemented, not because of bad quality, but due to significant under-funding of the relevant programmes; stresses that research and innovation are very competitive markets, with researchers being drawn to other regions of the world as a result of the unavailability of funding opportunities in Europe; underlines that the UK will move from being the main beneficiary of many Union R&D

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programmes to being a strong competitor; invites the Council to take into account the fact that every gap of EUR 10 billion in Horizon Europe will result in a GDP loss of EUR 110 billion over the next 25 years; concludes that low budgetary ambitions for R&D would contradict any pledge favourable to competitiveness or fighting climate change, particularly regarding the efforts that still lie ahead to meet the Europe 2020 target of 3 % GDP;

17. Underlines that transport infrastructure investment can meet both objectives of supporting EU's economy in the current context and efforts to fight climate change, as well as the to shift to sustainable mobility, relying in particular on the completion of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), the Shift2Rail and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) policies; calls on the Commission to align all CEF projects with the Paris Agreement objectives;

18. Reiterates that a competitive space industry is vital for the business landscape of Europe by providing high-quality jobs, significant R&D activities and ensuring the autonomy of a European satellite infrastructure; highlights the benefits of data generated in space as an essential tool for land and environmental monitoring;

19. Stresses that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) make up 99 % of all companies in the Member States and contribute significantly to the creation of jobs, economic stability and, increasingly, to sustainability efforts, and that these companies are most likely to be the most affected by the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak; stresses that SMEs face difficulties in finding financing opportunities and recalls the role of the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) in this regard; recalls Parliament's position on doubling the financial envelope of its successor's lines within the Single Market programme for the next MFF, which is expected to allow for a success rate of high-quality proposals of at least 80 %; stresses that financial support for SMEs should also be channelled through the InvestEU SMEs window, to make products and services market ready and enable their rapid scaling up on global markets; reiterates the need to further expand opportunities to create and scale up start-ups and to put special emphasis on the digital transformation of SMEs, also supported by the Single Market Gateway as an e-government business facilitator, in compliance with ambitious consumer protection policies, as well as their ecological transition; welcomes, furthermore, in this context, the various initiatives from the European Investment Bank (EIB) group, namely the mobilisation of EUR 40 billion for impacted SMEs, the EUR 5 billion available for companies in the health sector and the EUR 25 billion guarantee fund to be financed by its shareholders;

20. Stresses that the ongoing crisis will affect many regions and sectors considerably; in this context, is convinced that cohesion policy will play a key role and be more than ever before essential to stimulate the economic recovery in all EU territories, strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Union and will require additional funding and more flexibility to respond to the complex environmental, social, economic and demographic challenges ahead; underlines that, if the adoption of the 2021-2027 MFF and the relevant legal basis are delayed, a transitional period between the two programming periods will be indispensable;

21. Believes that tourism, as one of the sectors most affected by the crisis, needs a comprehensive strategy supported by a specific allocation through a separate EU programme in the next MFF; insists that particular attention and support should be given to small and family-run businesses, especially in the cases of agri-tourism and small hospitality providers who will face more difficulties in complying with new safety standards, as well as insular regions and ultra-peripheral regions;

22. In the light of the immediate and long-term major negative social impacts of the current situation, underlines the importance of fully implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights in the 2021 EU budget and the crucial role of strengthened EU social actions, notably the European Social Fund+, in the economic recovery, and, in particular, to tackle unemployment among young people and the elderly, child poverty, the risk of poverty and social exclusion, discrimination, to ensure a reinforced social dialogue, addressing long-term structural demographic change and guarantee access for all, and especially for ageing populations, to vital and key services such as healthcare, mobility, adequate nutrition and decent housing;

23. Calls for the 2021 budget to pay particular attention to the needs of and relations with the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), as they can be particularly vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change; stresses, furthermore, that access to funding for the OCTs must be improved as they possess limited administrative resources and expertise owing to their special status and size;

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24. Stresses that internal security is an integral part of EU citizens' expectations of a Union that protects; underlines that security threats such as terrorist attacks, cross-border organised crime, and new types of criminal activity such as cybercrime, pose an ongoing threat to the cohesion of the European Union and require a strong, coordinated European response; believes that this requires intensified cross-border cooperation between competent authorities; stresses that strengthening and modernising IT systems with a focus on better interoperability of systems, facilitated access and readability of data are mandatory to ensuring effective and rapid cooperation between police, judicial and other competent authorities; takes note that the Commission is expected to launch a new Security Union Strategy in 2021, which will comprise a set of initiatives in key areas related to these threats;

25. Calls on the Commission to allocate the necessary budget in order to ensure that the EU civil protection mechanism has a greater capacity, so that the EU will be better prepared and able to respond to all types of natural disasters, pandemics and emergencies, such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies; reiterates the importance of the EU civil protection mechanism to better protect citizens from disasters;

26. Stresses the success of the Erasmus+ Programme in enhancing youth mobility, training and skills; highlights the need to adequately fund the programme, inter alia, to make it accessible to people from all backgrounds and age groups;

27. Recalls that the promotion of European values and cultures plays an active role in supporting democracy, non-discrimination and gender equality, and tackling disinformation and fake news; stresses, in this respect, the need to provide sufficient funding for Justice, Rights and Values programmes and to reinforce the resources dedicated to supporting victims of gender-based violence within this programme; underlines that the cultural and creative sectors, as well as tourism, are and will be among the main sectors that are victims of the crisis the EU is experiencing; calls for emergency measures for those sectors and a strengthening of the Creative Europe programme;

28. Expects a strong EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights to be in place by 2021; stresses that the 2021-2027 MFF should include a conditionality clause for the protection of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, which would guarantee that in order to benefit from EU funding, Member States must fully comply with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union;

29. Considers that the European Solidarity Corps is a fundamental tool for promoting civic engagement across the Union and strengthening Union citizenship; insists that the 2021 budget for the European Solidarity Corps be commensurate with the many expectations it has raised among young people across Europe, particularly in the volunteering strand; calls for sufficient funding to be allocated to cover the high demand for volunteering placements;

30. Calls for sufficient funding to be provided as a priority to support the activity of civil society organisations and other stakeholders active in promoting rights and strengthening and promoting Union values and the rule of law, including through the future Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme, in times when a shrinking space for civil society is being witnessed in several Member States;

31. Stresses the worrying and increasing backlash against gender equality and women's rights and the importance of EU instruments, including the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), to combat this situation; regrets that the Commission did not include a specific programme on gender equality in its proposal, and calls for ambitious and specific budget allocations to support women human rights defenders and the protection and promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights; stresses, therefore, the need to reinforce budgetary allocations that support universal respect for and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights;

32. Points out that the common agricultural policy (CAP) and the common fisheries policy (CFP) are cornerstones of European integration, which aim to ensure a safe, high-quality food supply and food sovereignty for Europeans, the proper functioning of food markets, the sustainable development of rural regions, generational renewal and the sustainable management of natural resources and the preservation of biodiversity; recalls the key role of these policies in contributing to stable and acceptable earnings for farmers and fisherwomen and fishermen, especially in the current difficult context; recalls its position for the 2021-2027 MFF negotiations to preserve the budgets for the CAP and CFP; asks for the reinforcement of these policies and for particular attention to be paid to small-scale agriculture and small fisheries; takes note that the CAP, together with other Union policies, will have an important role to play in fulfilling the Green Deal ambitions;

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33. Calls on the Commission to take into account in its proposal and subsequent amending act for the draft 2021 budget, the outcome of the political agreement to be reached on the transitional measures for the year 2021 (set out in the Commission's proposal of 31 October 2019 (COM(2019)0581)); further calls on Member States to ensure the timely allocation of sufficient resources for the continued improvement of the quality of data and indicators reported to the Union in order to fully comply with the 'EU Budget Focused on Results' (BFOR) initiative; insists on the high quality of data and indicators to properly assess the CAP;

34. Takes note of the most recent developments with regard to the migration situation at the EU's external border with Turkey, leading to the recent adoption of an amending budget 1/2020 in order to respond to the increased migration pressure; underlines that an adequate level of resources needs to be secured in the 2021 budget in anticipation of a possible continuation or even deterioration of this situation; recalls the need for solidarity and cooperation among all Member States in this field and for a common asylum policy; stresses the additional needs resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak to adopt specific measures for migrants as particularly vulnerable people, including preventive evacuation and relocation; recalls the regular need to reinforce the Asylum and Migration Fund over the last period to help Member States to cope with the refugee crisis, and to mobilise the special instruments for that purpose because the ceiling under heading 3 was too low, or through amending budgets; expects Member States to understand their own interests and to compensate for the effect of the delay in the adoption of the Dublin IV regulation by supporting the necessary appropriations and implementing the solidarity principle in this field; recalls the need for adequate funding to improve migrants' and refugees' living conditions in EU refugee camps, for law enforcement, training for border personnel and coastguards, and for effective measures for the integration of migrants and refugees;

35. Points out that well-managed legal migration is important to ensure an adequate response to the evolving labour market;

36. Notes that Turkey continues to host the largest refugee population in the world and that discussions are currently ongoing as to how the EU should continue its support to Turkey after the end of its commitments made under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey;

37. Stresses that immediate solidarity measures, in particular a relocation programme, should be introduced pending meaningful reform of the EU's asylum rules; requests, furthermore, that funding remain envisaged in the EU budget for the support of refugees in Turkey;

38. Calls for an ambitious 2021 budget in EU's external policies that would enable the Union to rise to the challenges it faces; recalls that peace and solidarity constitute core values that should be consistently supported by the EU budget; emphasises the need to increase the funding for the countries of the Western Balkans and for the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood in order to support political and economic reforms, as well as for other regions in need of financial support for their development;

39. Believes that the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) should focus its funding on the areas of the functioning of democratic institutions, the rule of law, good governance and public administration; welcomes the green light to opening accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, and calls for adequate financial provisions in order to support political reforms and alignment with the *acquis*;

40. Underlines that financial allocations under the IPA III should be conditional on respect for European values such as the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the democratic process, respect for fundamental values and good neighbourly relations; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of conditionality; asks the Commission to use the funds currently allocated under IPA III to support, through direct management by the EU, Turkey's civil society, human rights defenders and journalists, and to increase opportunities for people-to-people contacts, academic dialogue, access for Turkish students to European universities, and media platforms for journalists with the objective of protecting and promoting democratic values and principles, human rights and the rule of law;

41. Stresses that Parliament's first reading position on the NDICI was adopted on 4 March 2019, and its mandate regarding the NDICI was reconfirmed on 8 October 2019; recalls its position in favour of a contribution of 45 % of the overall financial envelope of the NDICI to climate objectives, environmental management and protection, biodiversity and combating desertification, and addressing the root causes of migration and forced displacement, and puts a strong focus on the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of women, children, refugees, displaced people, LGTBI persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples and ethnic and religious minorities;

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42. Recalls that the long-lasting solution to the current migration phenomenon lies in the political, economic and social development of the countries from which migration flows originate; calls for the respective external policy programmes to be endowed with sufficient financial resources to support fair and mutually beneficial partnerships between the EU and countries of origin and countries of transit, including those on the African continent; in the same context, in view of the difficult financial situation faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), calls on the EU to step up its financial support to the Agency in 2021, in order to preserve the uninterrupted provision of vital services to millions of Palestinian refugees;

43. Is concerned at the rapid worldwide spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the affected countries; is convinced that international cooperation is crucial to overcoming this global crisis; believes that the EU should take the lead in the global efforts to contain the pandemic and mitigate its impact; believes that the Union must show solidarity with affected third countries, including by mobilising additional resources, to help them rebuild their economies, mitigate the socio-economic impact of the crisis and strengthen the capacities of public health systems worldwide;

44. Recalls that human rights are an integral part of the EU's external action policy; reiterates the need for increased funding dedicated to supporting human rights worldwide, with a particular focus on the protection of human rights defenders, in particular those most at risk; stresses, in this regard, the need to continue the Human Rights Defenders Mechanism (Protectdefenders.eu) and to increase the funding dedicated to it; believes that the EU should strictly refrain from budget support as a means of providing assistance in countries which grossly fail to meet international standards in the field of human rights and democracy, or which fail to demonstrate their commitment to fighting corruption; highlights the importance of election observation missions, particularly by local civil society groups, and calls for an appropriate level of funding;

45. Calls for further funding for strategic communication actions to counter disinformation campaigns, which are increasingly being used to undermine democratic order in the Union and in countries in the Union's near neighbourhood; highlights the importance of the flagship project of the European External Action Service's 'East StratCom Task Force — EUvsDisinfo' in the fight against disinformation, propaganda and foreign influence;

46. Emphasises the importance of providing adequate financial support to frame a genuine European Defence Union, promote strategic autonomy and bolster the EU's role at global level; stresses in particular the importance of maintaining its position regarding the amounts for the European Defence Fund (EDF) and for military mobility; stresses that continued support to and enhanced coordination of defence-related policy and actions under the European Defence Agency (EDA), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the EDF and other initiatives should be ensured; urges the Commission to provide for the funding of the administrative and operating expenditure of the EDA and PESCO from the Union budget, thereby restoring Parliament's budgetary function as provided for by Article 41 of the TEU;

47. Reiterates that the new External Financing Instruments (EFI) architecture should enhance coherence, accountability, efficiency and democratic oversight; emphasises the need for a greater role for Parliament in the strategic steering of the new instruments; expects to be involved from an early stage in the (pre-)programming of the new instruments;

48. Urges the Commission to assess and prepare for all possible scenarios to ensure the sound financial management of the Union budget, defining clear commitments and outlining mechanisms and protecting the EU budget; calls on the Commission to ensure that the future participation of UK in EU programmes respects a fair balance as regards the contributions and benefits;

49. Expresses its intention for the United Kingdom to remain as close a partner in as many EU programmes as possible, in particular Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe;

50. Recalls the pivotal role played by EU agencies in the implementation of EU policy objectives and reaffirms the importance of endowing these bodies with sufficient and predictable funding and staff for the efficient running of their duties, while rejecting any unjustified and arbitrary cuts to their budgets in real terms; highlights the key role performed by the European Environment Agency in developing awareness with regard to climate change, the European Labour Authority in promoting labour mobility, as well as the European Asylum Support Office and the Fundamental Rights Agency in supporting asylum seekers looking for protection in Europe;

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51. At the same time, stresses the strong need to combat human trafficking and smuggling, as well as to support EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies, which provide assistance to Member States on external borders, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex); takes note of the role that Frontex is called on to play in the context of the current migration crisis taking place at the EU's external borders with Turkey; calls for appropriate funding levels for border management in the 2021 budget;

52. Notes that agencies operating in the area of security, law enforcement and criminal justice cooperation are being assigned an increasing number of tasks; requests increased financial resources and staff posts for these agencies, in particular for the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), the European Police Office (Europol), the European Police College (CEPOL), the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), as well as adequate funding and staff for those that will be working on money laundering and terrorism financing;

53. Is concerned about the insufficient level of funding and staff provided to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in the course of the 2020 budgetary procedure and, with a view to 2021, calls on the Commission to increase staff and resources for this institutional body and to protect its budgetary autonomy; underlines that the establishment of the EPPO must not result in the a deterioration of the capacity of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) to function properly;

54. As a result of the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Europe and of the need for a prompt, coordinated and coherent EU response, urgently calls on the Commission to provide adequate and necessary funding to the relevant EU agencies which need to work and support the Commission and the Member States in the effort to tackle this pandemic, in particular the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA); insists that the Commission and the Council refrain from cutting the resources of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA);

55. Underlines the need to substantially reinforce the European Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), taking into account the additional tasks conferred on it through recent legislation, including the Clean Energy Package; recalls, furthermore, the need for additional resources for the Agency for Support for BEREC (BEREC Office) to carry out its tasks enshrined in the BEREC Regulation and the European Electronic Communications Code;

56. Recalls that no Union policy, whether to cope with the COVID-19 crisis or to implement the European Green Deal, can be properly implemented without the support of a dedicated Union civil service and sufficient funding;

57. Believes, in the ongoing political and economic context, that the Conference on the Future of Europe should be adequately supported, also on the budgetary side, and that the Commission, among other institutions involved in this project, should be equipped with the necessary means to make a success of it;

58. Asks the Commission to lead by example in ensuring high-quality and socially responsible procurement, so that contracts are awarded to companies respecting environmental and core labour standards, and in enforcing improved and stricter criteria to prevent conflicts of interest;

59. Calls for a gender-responsive evaluation of the previous budgetary period and the implementation of gender budgeting in the 2021 EU budget; expects, therefore, the Commission to include in its draft budget an annex that draws together gender-specific information on objectives, inputs, outputs and results, and that presents financing commitments for gender equality and the related tracking measures;

A sufficient and realistic level of payments

60. Is determined to avoid a new payment crisis, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; reiterates that the overall payment ceiling must also take into account the unprecedented volume of outstanding commitments at the end of 2020 to be settled under the next MFF; further notes that the focus of payment appropriations in 2021 will largely be on completion of 2014-2020 programmes; insists, however, that this should not hinder the launch of new programmes;

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61. Insists, therefore, in line with the 2020 measures, on the need to keep ensuring a high level of liquidity to Member States as part of the response to COVID-19 pandemic;
62. Underlines that cooperation between Member States in the field of taxation incomes would bring back to their national budgets much more than would any cut to expenditure in the EU annual budgets;
63. Calls on the Commission to ensure that no EU funding is granted to any parties subject to EU restrictive measures (including contractors or subcontractors, participants in workshops and/or training courses, and recipients of financial support to third parties);
64. Is convinced that any legal person who is a beneficial owner of legal entities receiving funds from the EU budget must be prohibited from receiving any funds from the existing, as well as the future European budget under the rules of the Regulation on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027, including direct agricultural payments and any disbursements, expenditures, guarantees or other benefits dealt with therein if they are in a clear conflict of interests as defined in Article 61 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046;
65. Reiterates its long-standing view that new political priorities and upcoming challenges for the EU should be financed by fresh appropriations and not by reducing the appropriations of existing programmes; considers that this principle should also apply to amending budgets;
66. Notes that, as the first year of the potentially agreed next MFF, the 2021 budget will be the first reflecting a new budgetary nomenclature; calls on the Commission to involve the budgetary authority appropriately in its preparation; believes that the new nomenclature, while being better aligned with the policy priorities, must be sufficiently detailed to allow the budgetary authority to fulfil its decision-making role effectively, and for Parliament in particular to fulfil its democratic oversight and scrutiny roles;
67. Notes that, as the arm of the budgetary authority directly elected by the citizens, Parliament will fulfil its political role and put forward proposals for pilot projects and preparatory actions expressing its political vision for the future; commits itself, in this context, to proposing a package of pilot projects and preparatory actions developed in close cooperation with each of its committees so as to strike the right balance between political will and technical feasibility, as assessed by the Commission;

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