



2024/2019(DEC)

29.1.2025

OPINION

of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023, Section III – Commission (2024/2019(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Gheorghe Falcă

PA_NonLegDec

OPINION

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Takes notice of the opinion of the European Court of Auditors ('the Court') that the consolidated accounts of the Union for 2023 present fairly, in all material respects, the Union's financial position, the results of its operations, its cash flows and the changes in its net assets; is concerned that the level of error for the 2023 budget expenditure increased from 4,2% to 5,6%, noting that, in line with the Court's assessment, the errors are both material and pervasive; calls for the introduction of more effective error detection and prevention systems in order to reduce the significant level of errors in expenditure;
2. Welcomes a very high execution of commitment and payment appropriations by DG MOVE in 2023 (respectively, 100% and 99%); remarks that its total payments amounted to EUR 453,58 million, the vast majority of them being operational, and the administrative part accounting only for less than 0,1%;
3. Observes that in 2023, as in the past few years, DG MOVE's main budget management mode was indirect management (91.4% of the expenditure, including the contributions to the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) as well as to the decentralized agencies and joint undertakings under its supervision); points out that direct management (8.6% of the expenditure) included grants and procurement related to the research programmes as well as grants and support actions in relation to the Connecting Europe Facility for Transport, Single European Sky (SES) advisory bodies, and administrative agreements; remarks that the key elements considered in the framework of control activities applicable to the operational and financial implementation of its spending programmes under the direct and indirect management provide the necessary assurance;
4. Welcomes the promotion of its Action Plan to improve the budget implementation; takes note that this Action Plan includes target dates, analyses of deviations compared to the targets, and monthly reporting to the senior Management; points out that this successfully led to the high levels of budget implementation, individualization of all the global commitments and reduced number of global commitments at the end of 2023; takes note that DG MOVE has resorted to a wider use of existing framework contracts, thus reducing the burden of using heavier procedures;
5. Welcomes the internal control processes applied by DG MOVE to ensure a sound management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions; however, takes notice of the case of non-compliance with the legal and financial provisions, which was identified in the Court's 2023 Annual report and where DG MOVE failed to respect technical eligibility parameters in the context of a military mobility infrastructure project; calls on DG MOVE to ensure diligence in relation to project award criteria;
6. Calls on the Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the funding allocated to the cross-border and multi-country infrastructure projects, facing significant

implementation challenges, financial difficulties, or delays, such as Rail Baltica; points out that this review should address inefficiencies in planning and management as well as escalating construction costs that threaten project timelines and objectives; reiterates that greater transparency in the management of public funds increases citizens' trust in the EU institutions;

7. Reiterates that mobility is a right for all EU citizens and underscores the paramount importance of ensuring that transport and mobility systems are universally accessible, seamlessly interconnected, highly efficient, and financially attainable for everyone and that thereby no citizen is excluded or disadvantaged; in the same vein, stresses that rural transport infrastructure and services are crucial for maintaining economic prosperity and social equity in those areas, ensuring equitable access to transportation for individuals with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities; believes that integrating public transportation with innovative, personalized on-demand and shared mobility solutions offers a promising pathway to addressing long-standing mobility challenges faced by rural communities;
8. Commends the effective work of CINEA in implementation of the Connecting Europe Facility for Transport (CEF-T) programme; notes with satisfaction that the CEF-T call published by CINEA in 2023 made EUR 7 billion available for projects targeting new and improved European transport infrastructure; draws attention to the need to simplify the application procedures under CEF-T in order to enable greater participation of smaller entities and local initiatives in the development of European transport infrastructure; regrets that the CEF-T budget does not cover all the needs for sustainable transport investments and that most of the CEF-T budget has already been allocated, leaving a funding gap until 2027; in this context, calls to increase the CEF-T budget envelope within the upcoming MFF and CEF revisions;
9. Recalls that 2023 was the third year in the implementation of Horizon Europe programme and acknowledges the successful completion of two major transport calls under the Cluster 5 Work Programme, which led to new transport research and innovation projects in the fields of road, aviation and waterborne transport, as well as on infrastructures, logistics, safety and new mobility services; notes that the number of the Horizon Europe transport R&I projects, managed by CINEA, reached around 220, with the total value of approximately EUR 1.5 billion; acknowledges the work of DG MOVE throughout 2023 on the review of the programme's current Strategic Plan that will lapse in 2024 and on the design of the next Strategic Plan for 2025–2027; however, repeats that Horizon Europe expenditure remains at high risk and is the primary source of errors identified by the Court;
10. Welcomes the work carried out in 2023, which, in line with European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, focused on sustainability and reducing the transport emissions; points out that 2023 saw the conclusion of the inter-institutional negotiations on several key “Fit for 55” initiatives, including FuelEU Maritime, ReFuelEU Aviation, and revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive; takes notice of the proposal on Greening freight package aiming to modernize freight transport and improve its energy and operational efficiency; salutes the publication of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) package in 2023 to improve rail interoperability

and reduce national rules that hinder the development of long distance, cross-border rail services;

11. Appreciates that supporting Ukraine remained a key priority for the Commission in 2023; stresses in this context, that the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes allowed Ukraine to import around 40 million tonnes of goods it needs: from military and humanitarian aid, to fuel and other products; furthermore, notes that the total value of trade via the Solidarity Lanes at the end of 2023 was estimated at around EUR 120 billion; takes notice of the close involvement of DG MOVE in development of the new transport-related sanctions against the Russian and Belarusian regimes; welcomes its contribution to the preparatory work that resulted in the European Council decision to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova;
12. At the same time recalls that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the resulting sanctions imposed on Russia continued to adversely impact the EU transport sector in 2023, leading to traffic shortages, supply chain bottlenecks, and the necessity to bypass traditional routes, thereby extending journey times and increasing costs; points out that the Eastern border regions, especially in the Baltic states, Finland, Poland, and Romania, have been particularly affected by economic losses and a halt of cross-border mobility as a consequence of the Russian aggression; calls on the Commission to introduce targeted measures, including in the next MFF, to facilitate recovery of the affected regions;
13. Highlights that, in the framework of the ongoing implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0, the Commission, along with the European External Action Service (including EU Military Staff), launched the study on the main military mobility corridors for large-scale short-notice movements;
14. Recalls that the Commission's publication of the Transition Pathway for Tourism in 2022 was followed by an online call for commitments, inviting stakeholders to submit concrete pledges for action in the field of tourism; reminds that a pledge is not a legally binding obligation but a voluntary commitment that reflects the ambition of action supporting the shared transition objectives; notes with satisfaction that the 3rd Report on Stakeholder Commitments and Pledges published by DG GROW in March 2023, included 179 organizations from the EU and non-EU countries, 107 of which made 382 pledges, now addressing all Transition Pathway topics, including policy and governance, green and digital transition, skills and resilience; welcomes the role of DG GROW in organizing regular tourism stakeholder events, including European Tourism Day that took place in May 2023 and served as a platform to discuss the results of the above-mentioned report.

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur for the opinion declares under his exclusive responsibility that he did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION BY COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	29.1.2025
Result of final vote	+: 32 -: 6 0: 5
Members present for the final vote	Oihane Agirregoitia Martínez, Daniel Attard, Tom Berendsen, Rachel Blom, Nikolina Brnjac, Nina Carberry, Benoit Cassart, Carlo Ciccioi, Anna Maria Cisint, Vivien Costanzo, Johan Danielsson, Valérie Devaux, Siegbert Frank Droese, Gheorghe Falcă, Jens Gieseke, Borja Giménez Larraz, Sérgio Gonçalves, Roman Haider, Sérgio Humberto, Dariusz Joński, François Kalfon, Martine Kemp, Sophia Kircher, Elena Kountoura, Luis-Vicențiu Lazarus, Julien Leonardelli, Vicent Marzà Ibáñez, Alexandra Mehnert, Ștefan Mușoiu, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Philippe Olivier, Matteo Ricci, Rosa Serrano Sierra, Stanislav Stoyanov, Kai Tegethoff, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Kosma Złotowski
Substitutes present for the final vote	Alberico Gambino, Jutta Paulus, Dario Tamburrano, Kris Van Dijck, Ana Vasconcelos
Members under Rule 216(7) present for the final vote	Elisabeth Grossmann

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

32	+
NI	Luis-Vicențiu Lazarus
PPE	Tom Berendsen, Nikolina Brnjac, Nina Carberry, Gheorghe Falcă, Jens Gieseke, Borja Giménez Larraz, Sérgio Humberto, Dariusz Joński, Martine Kemp, Sophia Kircher, Alexandra Mehnert, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi
Renew	Oihane Agirregoitia Martínez, Benoit Cassart, Valérie Devaux, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Ana Vasconcelos
S&D	Daniel Attard, Vivien Costanzo, Johan Danielsson, Sérgio Gonçalves, Elisabeth Grossmann, François Kalfon, Ștefan Mușoiu, Matteo Ricci, Rosa Serrano Sierra
The Left	Elena Kountoura, Dario Tamburrano
Verts/ALE	Vicent Marzà Ibáñez, Jutta Paulus, Kai Tegethoff

6	-
ESN	Siebert Frank Droese, Stanislav Stoyanov
PfE	Rachel Blom, Roman Haider, Julien Leonardelli, Philippe Olivier

5	0
ECR	Carlo Ciccioli, Alberico Gambino, Kris Van Dijck, Kosma Złotowski
PfE	Anna Maria Cisint

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention