Reasoned opinion from the Riksdag

The Riksdag has examined the Commission’s amended proposal for a Council decision on the System of Own Resources of the European Union (COM(2020) 445).

With regard to the EU budget and negotiations about the coming multiannual financial framework, the Riksdag has on a number of occasions maintained that Sweden will continue to work for an efficient and restrictive budget policy within the EU, which entails cost-effective use of EU funds and strict budget discipline. The Swedish restrictive fundamental position on the EU’s budget policy has broad support in the Riksdag. In the opinion of the Riksdag, the EU’s economic measures in response to COVID-19, including measures to support recovery, should be temporary, well-targeted, proportional and budget restrictive. In as far as it is possible, the support should be based on existing instruments and forms of financing, and not on new own resources. It should also be targeted at the parts of the EU with the greatest need, and which have been worst affected – economically and socially – by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Riksdag notes that the EU budget has previously, on occasion, been used to borrow funds for further lending within the framework of various mechanisms. However, borrowing has never previously occurred in order to finance operating expenditure in the EU budget. The current proposal entails significant borrowing for the purpose of financing substantial increases in EU programmes. It cannot be considered to be clarified that the borrowed funds will primarily be used to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Riksdag therefore considers that the measures are far too extensive to achieve the objectives of the proposal. Furthermore, the Riksdag considers that there is no clear justification as to why this type of borrowing would be better dealt with at Union level than at national level.

In this context, the Riksdag would also like to bring to mind that, when considering the Commission’s original proposal for a Council decision on the System of Own Resources in June 2018, the Riksdag considered that the proposal was not compliant with the principle of subsidiarity (Statement 2017/18:FiU51).

In view of this, the Committee considers that the Commission’s amended proposal for a Council decision on the System of Own Resources of the European Union cannot be considered compliant with the principle of subsidiarity.