

# 2009 budget: Parliament's estimates

2008/2022(BUD) - 20/05/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 556 votes to 40, with 61 abstentions, a resolution on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2009.

The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Janusz **LEWANDOWSKI** (EPP-ED, PL), on behalf of the Committee on Budgets.

Overall, the Parliament is in favour of a 2009 budget based on the main challenges identified in its resolution of 10 April 2008 on the budgetary guidelines (see [BUD/2008/2021](#)). These challenges are:

- the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty;
- 2009 is an election year for the Parliament;
- the new Statute for Members.

This budget shall also avoid wasting resources. That is why the Parliament calls for an efficient use of resources by identifying all possible savings. At the same time, the Parliament recalls that the 2009 budget will stay below the traditional voluntary share of 20% of heading 5 (administrative expenditure) of the financial framework. It therefore endorses the draft estimates for the financial year 2009 as adopted by the Bureau on 21 April 2008 (formal adoption of the draft budget will take place in October 2008).

**Lisbon Treaty:** the Parliament notes that human resources and overall resources for Lisbon-related issues are essential: 65 new posts have subsequently been integrated into budgetary estimates (corresponding to EUR 2 020 023 for 2009), placing 15% of those appropriations in reserve pending the submission, by the end of June 2008, of complementary information on possible redeployment operations in 2008 and 2009. Overall, the Parliament agrees with the principle of budgeting all foreseeable needs in the Bureau's preliminary draft estimates, including a "Lisbon reserve" of **EUR 2 million** awaiting further evaluation of needs in terms of human and financial resources. In this respect, it reiterates that the tasks and responsibilities, which can genuinely be regarded as new following the new Treaty, as well as activities that can be discontinued or re-prioritised, are especially important to identify. Furthermore, the Parliament considers that the new Treaty will certainly have an impact on political groups, which will need strengthening in terms of staff

**Visitors' Centre and dependence on external IT consultants:** the Parliament notes that an additional need, not currently budgeted, might arise for the Visitors' Centre. This amount would be of a multi-annual nature. Furthermore, the Parliament confirms its intention to continue the financing of priorities established in the 2008 budget (notably to improve services to Members in connection with interpretation and with the analytical service of the library). The Parliament also notes that it will continue its three-year plan to reclaim expertise in the IT area, reducing the dependence on external consultants in some key areas (therefore confirming the increase of posts in this area). It considers, however, that, as of now, related savings in the current consultant costs should be demonstrated.

**Buildings policy:** the Parliament notes that a long-term strategic plan on buildings policy including maintenance costs and environmental issues will be presented before the end of May 2008. The plenary stresses the importance of a thorough debate on this issue in view of arriving at relevant decisions on the way forward and the destination of these appropriations as soon as possible. The Parliament therefore wishes to be informed about the work of the Bureau with the Commission on an agreement on purchase of buildings and costs. Pending such information, it takes note of the fact that the buildings reserve included in the draft estimates amounts to EUR 30 000 000, an increase of EUR 10 000 000 compared to 2008. The

**plenary therefore decides to place in reserve EUR 3 400 000** entered by the Bureau in the preliminary draft estimates, **pending technical, administrative and financial clarifications** on the proposed **asbestos removal work in the SDM building in Strasbourg**.

**Other priorities:** the plenary also stressed the importance of good cooperation between the European institutions, particularly Parliament, the Council and the Commission, in the field of information and communication policy. The Parliament looks forward to the proposal on a Knowledge Management System that should be presented to the Bureau within the next few weeks.

**Statute of MEPs and parliamentary assistants:** satisfied that reasonable estimations have been carried out as concerns the expenditure relating to the new Members' Statute, the Parliament insists that it be kept informed of any updated figures in this area. It insists that any updated figures should be communicated as soon as possible and underlines the possibility of fine-tuning the associated appropriations at a later stage. In this context, the Parliament welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-General to immediately update its Bureau and Committee on Budgets on any new information from the Member States on their intended participation and/or opt-outs as and when it becomes available. The Plenary is also encouraged by the information that contacts have been made with Member States, the Council and the current and forthcoming Council Presidencies, concerning the agreement on a Statute for Assistants. The Parliament recalls, in this respect, its guidelines and stresses once again the importance it attaches to resolving this issue.

Lastly, the Parliament underlines that, notwithstanding the positive outcome of the enhanced cooperation so far, and the results of the pre-conciliation meeting in particular, a more detailed examination of individual budget items should take place before the first reading of the budget in autumn 2008. It states that it will thus examine and take the final budgetary decisions at that time.