

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

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PURPOSE: to present the final annual accounts of the European Communities for the financial year 2007 - Other institutions: section VI - Economic and Social Committee.

CONTENT: this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the financial statement of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) for 2007. It presents an analysis of the institution's financial management as well as its main axes of expenditure.

The figures mentioned hereafter are taken from volume I of the [consolidated annual accounts of the European Communities](#) for the year 2007:

Commitment appropriations:

- commitment appropriations authorised: EUR 116 million;
- commitments made in 2007: EUR 107 million (implementation rate of 91.64%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: EUR 1 million (0.54% of total commitments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 9 million (7.82% of the budget).

Payment appropriations:

- payment appropriations authorised: EUR 128 million;
- payments made in 2007: EUR 109 million (implementation rate of 85.66%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: EUR 8 million (6.17% of total payments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 10 million (8.17% of the budget).

Main axes of expenditure for 2007: in 2007, the secretariat's work was organised around the principal overall objectives for the secretariat-general, as set out in the secretariat's 2007 work programme (WP 2007). These included: (i) assistance for members; (ii) communication; (iii) support measures; (iv) management of the secretariat; (v) staff policy; (vi) the review of the cooperation agreement with the CoR. The report notes that the achievements may be considered to be satisfactory, even if negotiations on the new cooperation agreement with the CoR paralysed or slowed some scheduled initiatives.

Among the most symbolic actions in each of these areas, this summary will focus on the following points:

- **assistance for members:** this area was characterised by the installation of Bulgarian and Romanian members, improved information for members and continued implementation of the 2005 conclusions on assistance for members, the improvement of working methods and consolidation of the role and support for the activities of the new structures set up - liaison group with European NGO networks. Other initiatives were taken in order to develop relations with the Commission, Parliament and Council;
- **communication:** 2007 was characterised by the implementation of the strategic communication plan and by the strengthening of communication within the secretariat;
- **support measures:** the EESC implemented a policy for partnership with outside organisations. 2007 was also characterised by the fitting-out of the Van Maerlant area and refitting in line with the Jacques Delors area and a guarantee from the Parliament concerning provision of a room for the holding of the plenary sessions. The EESC also launched its EMAS certification;
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management of the secretariat: the secretariat simplified and reviewed its working methods (implementation of the working party's conclusions of November 2006) and continued its efforts at interdepartmental cooperation and cooperation with the group secretariats;

- **staff policy:** discussion on the adoption of a management policy with training as a priority and measures aimed at increasing professionalism in certain services;
- **review of the cooperation agreement with the Committee of the Regions:** the EESC achieved its objective of establishing a new framework to continue the close cooperation with the CoR under a long-term commitment. It was possible to maintain jointly operating services in the most important areas: infrastructure, IT and telecommunications as well as translation and production of documents. However, at the urging of the CoR, some decoupling in non-strategic areas could not be avoided. As a result, additional resources had to be made available in 2008 by means of efficiency gains in the areas remaining in the Joint Services and mini-cooperation agreements had to be drawn up in the areas concerned by decoupling (i.e. the medical and welfare service, the library, the pre-press and the internal services). These mini-agreements were concluded in March 2008. Lastly, the new agreement introduces a clear structure, which is expected to facilitate cooperation and communication between the two Committees.

The other main points concerning the implementation of the EESC budget can be summarised as follows:

Title I (staff expenditure): as in the previous year, this Title was characterised by a less efficient implementation of staff expenses than expected (enlargement related staff). Given that this was the case for three consecutive years, this Title was significantly reduced for 2008. Note also the poor implementation of translation expenses. Lastly, in 2007 the institution tried to predict its needs in terms of childcare facilities for its staff in order to reach a balanced solution for financing the interinstitutional crèche.

Title II (operating expenditure): this Title was characterised by the end of the building policy of the two committees and by the continuation of their plans to move to their respective new locations. At 31 December 2007, the EESC and the CoR together had five buildings under long-term leases:

- Building Bertha von Suttner (BvS), Rue Montoyer 92-102;
- Building Jacques Delors (JDE), Rue Belliard 103-113;
- Building Remorqueur (REM), Rue Belliard 93;
- Rue Belliard 68-72;
- Rue de Trèves 74.

The total net-asset-value of the 5 buildings is calculated at EUR 236 556 808 (the EESC-part is EUR 144 108 828). As in previous years the EESC has prepaid on the leases for some of the buildings. Prepayments were made for Rue de Trèves 74 and Remorqueur building (REM), Rue Belliard 93.