2010 budget: other sections: Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year and the budget

2009/2006(BUD) - 22/04/2009

The Committee on Budgets unanimously adopted the report drawn up by Vladimír MAKA, calling on the Parliament to approve the estimates of the European Parliament for the financial year 2010. At this stage, the overall level of the budget is **EUR 1 571 512 726**, which represents a rate of increase of 2.72% compared to 2009 and which leaves a better margin of manoeuvre for the new parliament. The committee decides to maintain the contingency reserve at the same level as in 2009 (EUR 10 million). The overall level of the 2010 budget would also stay below the traditional voluntary share of 20% of heading 5 (administrative expenditure) of the multi-annual financial framework.

Recalling the challenges to which Parliament should respond as outlined in its resolution of 10 March 2009 on the budgetary guidelines, MEPs highlight that there are two fundamental elements of the 2010 budget: (i) **optimal and equal access to language facilities** for members; (ii) actions related to Parliament's enhanced **legislative role**.

MEPs consider that better planning needs to be considered for its 2010 budget and that it be made more transparent. Moreover, they note that the full budget proposal should be presented at the estimates stage in the spring and that the use of 'amending letters' in the autumn must be limited to truly unforeseen events and/or technical updates. They welcome the timely cooperation between the Bureau and Committee on Budgets (notably the pilot project on enhanced cooperation). Furthermore, MEPs recall that the principles of prior consultation and transparency are essential. In particular, they stress the need to maintain a sufficient level of financial resources needed for major issues.

On a more technical level, MEPs make the following points:

- **Posts and restructuring**: MEPs stress the considerable increases already granted for 2009 and consider, in this context, that it is premature, at this stage of the budgetary procedure, to authorise the creation of 30 new posts, while noting that the level of redeployment of posts suggested is very low. They therefore decide not to authorise the creation of these posts (provisionally). MEPs also note the re-structuring plan for DG INLO in relation to the maintenance and management of the Parliament's buildings and the creation of specialised central services to improve the quality of budgetary control and of public procurement procedures. The final decisions in this area are part of the first reading of the budget in the autumn. According to MEPs, the choice to be made, from a budgetary point of view, relates to the level of property expertise Parliament needs to have in-house. MEPs note, in this respect, that the single external report deals mainly with building security, but also maintenance and management issues and how they can be improved. They therefore consider it essential that the medium to long-term building strategy plan be presented in good time before the first reading. Moreover, they call for further information concerning the amount requested as a reserve and delete the corresponding appropriations. MEPs also attach importance to the **new security policy for the Parliament**. They stress, in particular, the importance of an optimum use of resources (particularly concerning a cost-effective balance between internal staff and external agents). MEPs are also looking forward to receiving the cost-savings plan already drawn up within DG Presidency, and are concerned about the cost developments for operational budget lines related to security.

- **Multilingualism**: MEPs reiterate their wish that equal access to language facilities for members be an essential element of the 2010 budget. Whilst recognising that an effort has been made to accommodate this wish, MEPs consider that this obviously needs to be combined with the best possible use of resources. They call on their administration to urgently address the Inter-Institutional Working Group on multilingualism in order to prepare a proposal (technical level) in order to make sure that inter-institutional cooperation in this field, especially as concerns **the use of any free capacity**, is improved. They are disappointed that the system in place for better sharing of translation between institutions is hardly used at all and expect to see a proposal on where possibilities for improvement exist before the first reading. In particular, MEPs call for a cost /benefit analysis regarding translation in peak times, including the outsourcing to freelancers, as well as an update on how such resource sharing could be applied in all the fields in which the institutions have temporarily unused capacities, without diminishing the institution's independence and operational capacities (interpretation, renting out the premises, copy services, etc.);
- **Legislation**: MEPs welcome the fact that the Bureau's proposal follows up on last year's main priority, namely legislative work, but are of the opinion that the posts suggested need to be further analysed and should be considered within an overall package;
- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**: MEPs recall that clarification has been asked in the IT sector and expect a clear plan for an overall ICT strategy for Parliament. They consider that such a plan must strike a careful balance between the necessary 'centralisation' and economies-of-scale already implicit with the creation of a new and separate DG for this area, while guarding against overlaps and double spending. MEPs note the proposal for reducing the dependence on external consultants in this area (and the proposal for an increase of posts). According to MEPs, significant staff increases should lead to savings in consultant costs;
- **Multi-annual projects**: MEPs recall their expectations regarding important initiatives and projects in the field of information, such as the new library analytical service, the Policy Units of committees, as well as the vast array of other available information sources/systems, which take up increasing levels of appropriations. They therefore call for budgetary and functional stocktaking. They also note the fact that the Web-TV project is included at already foreseen levels in the Bureau's proposals and would welcome some further information on 'the return' for this investment (notably whether this project already has, or will, reduce the need for other types of information in print). MEPs also wish to leave the **Visitors Centre** a real possibility to get on with its business and open as soon as possible, in any case **no later than the beginning of 2010**. They therefore look forward to a final decision on the management concept of the Centre, whilst limiting out-sourcing.

Lastly, MEPs stress that a more detailed examination of individual budget items should take place before the first reading of the budget in the autumn. They note that they will examine and take the final budgetary decisions at that time.