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

2009/2006(BUD) - 05/05/2009 - Parliament's opinion on budgetary estimates/guidelines

The European Parliament adopted by 576 votes to 21, with 18 abstentions, a resolution aiming to approve the estimates of the European Parliament for the financial year 2010. It recalls that the adoption of the draft budget will take place at first reading in October 2009, in accordance with the voting procedure laid down by the Treaty.

Plenary notes that the overall level of the 2010 budget, as suggested by the Bureau, would stay below the traditional voluntary share of 20% of heading 5 (administrative expenditure) of the multiannual financial framework. The rate of increase suggested is 3.98% and that the resulting overall level would be marginally higher than in 2009 at 19.67% of appropriations under this heading.

The overall level of the budget is **EUR 1 590 012 726**, which represents a rate of increase of 3.92%. , in order to leave a larger margin of manoeuvre for the new parliament in the autumn as well as seeking to make all possible savings. It decides to maintain the contingency reserve at the same level as in 2009 (EUR 10 million).

Recalling the **challenges** to which Parliament should respond as outlined in its resolution of 10 March 2009 on the budgetary guidelines, Parliament highlights 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**.

Parliament considers that better planning needs to be considered for its 2010 budget and that it be made more transparent. It stresses the need to maintain a sufficient level of financial resources needed for major issues.

On a more technical level, Parliament makes the following points:

- **Post and restructuring**: Parliament takes good note, within the context of considerable increases already granted for 2009, of the proposals for the restructuring of services and changes to the Establishment Plan as put forward by the Bureau. It underlines its wish to consider the question of the related budgetary resources once a complete picture has been given of all the requests made, including those for groups, and stresses that it will be willing to carefully consider the package at that time, taking into account the need to improve Parliament's enhanced legislative role. It therefore decides **not to authorise the creation of 30 new posts at this stage**. It notes that the level of redeployment of posts suggested is very low and encourages further efforts on this issue. In this context, Parliament takes note that at its meeting on 1 April 2009, the Bureau unanimously approved 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. It stresses that the final decisions concerning the appropriate level of resources, for DG INLO as well as for other services, are part of the first reading of the budget in the autumn according to the normal procedures. Parliament considers it essential that the medium to long-term building strategy plan is presented in good time before the first reading in the autumn in order to be able to make the budgetary decisions. It warmly welcomes the Secretary General's commitment to present a draft to the Bureau as soon as possible

in the new term. It agrees with the Bureau to **reduce the building reserve at this stage of the budget procedure to EUR 18.5 million** until the introduction of the appropriate level of appropriations once the strategy in this area has been more clearly defined. Parliament also attaches importance to the new security policy for the Parliament. It stresses, in particular, the importance of an optimum use of resources (particularly concerning a cost-effective balance between internal staff and external agents). Parliament is 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**: Parliament calls on its 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. Parliament is 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. It also takes a keen interest in new technical tools for its translation services and asks for information on their development and the related financial consequences during 2010, including the study of the Euramis translation tool. In addition, Parliament calls 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**: Parliament welcomes 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)**: Parliament recalls that clarification has been asked in the IT sector and expect a clear plan for an overall ICT strategy for Parliament. It considers 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. It notes the proposal for reducing the dependence on external consultants in this area (and the proposal for an increase of posts). Parliament considers that significant staff increases should lead to savings in consultant costs. Parliament also requests a clarification as to how the 'provider-client' relationship functions in the area of ICT and to which degree the 'clients' can specify which projects they would like to see done, how the financing for carrying out those projects is arrived at and, ultimately, how it is ensured that these fit into the overall strategy.
- **Multi-annual projects**: Parliament recalls its 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. It therefore calls for budgetary and functional stocktaking. It also notes 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). Parliament also wishes 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**. It therefore looks forward to a final decision on the management concept of the Centre, whilst limiting out-sourcing.

Lastly, Parliament stresses that a more detailed examination of individual budget items should take place before the first reading of the budget in the autumn. It notes that they will examine and take the final budgetary decisions at that time.