2012 budget: estimates of revenue and expenditure - section I, Parliament

2011/2018(BUD) - 06/04/2011 - Parliament's opinion on budgetary estimates/guidelines

The European Parliament adopted by 479 votes to 176, with 23 abstentions, a resolution on the estimates of revenue and expenditure of Parliament for the financial year 2012 - Section I – Parliament.

General Framework and overall budget: Parliament welcomes the fact that the Bureau adopted savings compared to the originally suggested Preliminary Draft Estimates in its Preliminary Draft Estimates for the 2012 budget as adopted at its meeting on 23 March 2011 after its pre-conciliation with the Committee on Budgets. It confirms the proposal of the Bureau and sets the overall level of the Draft Estimates 2012 at **EUR 1 724 575 043**, representing 19.7% of heading 5 of the MFF. It notes that the rate of increase suggested is 2.3% over the 2011 budget.

Parliament calls for a long-term review of the European Parliament's budget. It asks for **future potential savings** to be identified in order to reduce costs and create resources for the long-term running of the Parliament as part of a legislative authority. It reaffirms that in the light of the difficult economic and budgetary conditions in the Member States, the Parliament should show its budgetary responsibility and self-restraint by staying under the current inflation rate. Members also reaffirm the needs for the 18 new MEPs following the Lisbon Treaty will be also integrated by a letter of amendment or an amending budget.

Parliament recalls that the ceiling for heading 5 of the MFF for the Union budget in 2012 is EUR 8 754 million. In favour of an amendment adopted in plenary, Parliament is of the opinion that Parliament and the other institutions should show budgetary responsibility and self-restraint in the context of economic crisis and the heavy burden of public debt and restraint in times of ongoing national budgetary consolidation efforts without undermining the goal of legislative excellence (the Committee on Budgets proposed to accept a revision of the ceiling of heading 5 of the MFF under the form of compensation: this revision should be an offsetting with a reduction of the ceiling of heading 5 (administration) by EUR 100 million and a corresponding increase of other headings in favour of youth. However, this proposal was not withheld in plenary).

Specific issues: Members encourage the Bureau to apply a stringent human resources management approach prior to the establishment of new posts within the European Parliament. They consider that the ongoing efforts to modernise and rationalise the administration and the proposals for 2012 should contribute to a **reduction in the external provision of services** and expects significant savings to be made here so as to achieve a level of expenditure comparable at least to that of 2010.

Other issues dealt with in the resolution concern the need to:

- continue to implement Parliament's environmental policy;
- start-up an information campaign;
- provide support for the multi-annual ICT strategy;
- continue to modernise and rationalise the administration;
- modernise and rationalise the security of the parliament (the committee requests a reserve of EUR 3 million, which would be lifted upon presentation of a viable concept for improvements and costs-plan);
- modernise the software application systems including the digital strategy with regard to the Web 2.0 tools and social networks, cloud computing system and Wifi, information and communication

policy, the knowledge management system, translation and interpretation, environmental policy and EMAS and active non-discrimination policies.

Parliament calls for efforts to modernise and rationalise the administration must also include the security of the Parliament. It requests a reserve of EUR 3 million, which would be lifted upon presentation of a viable concept for improvements and costs-plans. Plenary recalls that in resolution of 9 March 2011on guidelines for the 2012 budget procedure for the other institutions, Parliament calls for a thorough review to be implemented as to whether the right of freedom of access for European citizens to meet with their European representatives could be more effectively matched with the urgent need to provide security for those who work in the institutions. It asks the Secretary-General to submit such a report by 30 June 2011.

Parliament considers that in the implementation of the 2012 budget further savings should be achieved by reducing the consumption of namely water, electricity and paper and that an effort should be made to reduce transportation costs related to official missions and travel. In another amendment adopted in plenary, Parliament requests that a thorough review be conducted of the current links between the European Parliament and national parliaments with a view to seeing how to improve the sectoral contacts between parliamentary committees in the European Parliament and the Member States to generate a more substantive and satisfactory dialogue.

Buildings in construction: plenary considers that early payment, with a view to reducing financing costs, remains one of the key priorities for the future. Members ask in this context for optimal use of the budget resources, the development of a medium- and long-term strategy seeking to find the best solution and taking into account the need to assess various options and alternative financing possibilities while respecting the principles of transparency and sound financial management.

House of European History: an amendment was adopted in plenary stipulating that the Parliament will consider additional funding only on the basis of necessary information regarding:

- the amount and the sources of the expected means of financing;
- additional information regarding the legal implications;
- provided that all decisions relating to the project are subject to a proper decision-making procedure ensuring an open debate and transparency; takes note of the estimated total cost for setting up the House of European History, the estimated running costs and the staffing needs.

Members ask the Bureau to reduce the estimated running costs and requests - in order to maintain a transparent and fruitful dialogue with the parties involved - to be presented with a business plan setting out the long-term business strategy of the House of European History. It also requests to be informed as soon as possible on the building project and proposes a reserve of EUR 2 million until receipt of said business plan.

Parliament does not support the creation of a new budget line at this stage specifically for the House of European History. It therefore requests that the EUR 1 million which has been allocated to the new item ‘3247’ (House of European History) be transferred to Chapter 10 1 (contingency reserve). It considers, however, that any creation of such a line should be part of a transparent procedure and approved by the budgetary authority.

In conclusion, Parliament adopts the estimates for the financial year 2012 and recalls that the adoption of Parliament's position on the Draft Budget, as modified by the Council, will take place in October 2011, according to the procedure laid down by the Treaty.