2013 budget, other sections: guidelines

2012/2001(BUD) - 08/02/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgets adopted the report drafted by Derek VAUGHAN (S&D, UK) on the guidelines for the 2013 budget for the other institutions (European Parliament, Council, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, European Ombudsman, European Data Protection Supervisor and European External Action Service).

Members recall that the ceiling for Heading 5 of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the EU's budget in **2013 is EUR 9.181 billion in current prices** and that Croatia's accession will have an impact on the 2013 budget, in particular for the Parliament.

General framework and priorities for the 2013 budget: Members believe that the institutions, in the context of continued challenging economic circumstances, should freeze their administrative budgets. However, they emphasise the need to respect legally binding obligations and possible subsequent increases. In this context, Members call on the institutions to reinforce their interinstitutional cooperation with a view to sharing best practices, looking for savings and thus modernising their policies on human resources, organisation, technology and buildings. This interinstitutional cooperation is important in order to make Croatia's accession as smooth as possible.

Members also emphasise the importance of strengthening non-discrimination policies which facilitate the access, recruitment and integration of people with disabilities as well as the need for an effective environmental policy across the institutions.

European Parliament's budget: as far as Parliament's budget is concerned (section I of the budget), Members recall that significant savings were achieved in the 2012 budget due to structural and organisational reforms. They encourage the continuation of these. They consider that real savings can be made by identifying overlaps and inefficiencies across budgetary lines. The committee therefore calls on its Secretary-General to prepare a detailed report for submission to the Committee of Budgets containing a clear overview of budget lines that were under-implemented in 2011 and an objective analysis of the reasons for this.

Members believe that, in order to make significant long-term savings, an independent evaluation of the EP budget should be considered. They call for the creation of a working group for this purpose as well as for the speedy implementation of any conclusions reached by the group.

Welcoming the enhanced cooperation between the Committee on Budgets and the Bureau during the annual budget procedure, Members expect the Bureau to present prudent needs-based draft estimates that take account of possible subsequent increases arising from legally binding obligations and stresses that every effort should be made to ensure that any other targeted increases are counterbalanced by savings identified in other areas. In the meantime, they call for a freeze on budget lines related to all travel in 2013 and **no indexation of any of the Members' individual allowances until the end of the legislature**.

Members also stipulates the following:

- savings should not jeopardise the legislative activity of the EP
- the need for a dialogue and a transparent decision-making process in the field of building policy enabling precise information on the progress in buildings projects and its financial implications to be provided every six months. In this regard, Parliament states that **no new unforeseen building projects should be undertaken during the current legislature**.

Other institutions: in regard to the other institutions, the committee encourages them to look for further savings to maintain budgetary discipline and to freeze their budgets whilst bearing in mind legal obligations and new financial challenges such as the Croatian enlargement. It takes note of the European Court of Justice's (Section IV) request to amend its Statute in a way which will have a direct impact on the budget. As regards the EEAS, it calls for sound financial budgeting for this new institution.