2015 budget: estimates of revenue and expenditure - Section I, Parliament

2014/2003(BUD) - 17/04/2014 - Parliament's opinion on budgetary estimates/guidelines

The European Parliament adopted by 343 votes to 199 with 32 abstentions, a resolution on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year.

Parliament recalled that the 2015 budgetary procedure would run during a European election year, when the estimates of the Parliament for the financial year 2015 would be adopted by the current Parliament and the final budget will be **approved by the new Parliament** in the autumn. It noted that the sub-ceiling for overall administrative expenditure of the institutions has been set at EUR 7 351 million.

It indicated that, despite little room for manoeuvre and the need to counterbalance savings in other areas, certain investments should be considered in order to strengthen the institutional role of the Parliament and to improve the sustainability of the budget.

Parliament stressed that in order to allow the Members of the new Parliament to fulfil their mandate and to empower the Parliament's capacity to comply with all its powers, a sufficient level of resources should be ensured. It recalled that the level of the preliminary draft estimates for the 2015 budget, as suggested by the Secretary-General's Report, amounted to EUR 1 822 929 112 (20.09 % of heading V), noting also that:

- 0.67 % of this increase corresponds to the Members' allocation for the end of their mandate, which are statutory and obligatory costs and

- 1.42 % to long term investments in the construction of the KAD building.

At the same time, Parliament stressed that the 2015 budget should be set on a realistic basis and should be in line with the principles of budgetary discipline and sound financial management. It believed that the Union budget should reflect the current economic situation experienced by citizens across the Union, as the well as the fiscal constraints faced by many Member States, some of whom were engaged in serious efforts to bring their budgets onto a more sustainable long-term footing.

In any event. Parliament believed that the next legislature would have the possibility of reconsidering and adapting the budgetary priorities and take the final decision in October 2014.

Draft estimates: Parliament recalled that the draft estimates for the year 2015 stood at **EUR 1 794 929 112** , corresponding to an overall rate of increase of 1.8 % over the 2014 budget and to agree furthermore to include in its draft estimates the obligatory extraordinary expenditure of 0.4 % resulting from the new agreement on the coefficient for the adjustment of the remunerations and pensions. It invited the Secretary-General to present before the reading of the budget an estimate of the costs of the construction of the KAD building over the coming years in order to provide the correct amount in the 2015 budget. It also asked the Secretary General to evaluate, at the end of the year, the funds not used in the 2014 budget and to commit them to the **KAD project.**

In an amendment adopted in plenary, Parliament stated that further savings could be achieved by having a **critical look at the ICT budget lines, the expenditures on vehicles and the contingency reserve.**

Specific issues: Parliament stressed that structural economic measures undertaken throughout the 7th legislature had led to significant savings in the Parliament's budget, such as EUR 15 million and EUR

10 million annually in the field of interpretation and translation respectively, an additional EUR 4 million in travel expenses and EUR 28 million of savings of interest by pre-financing buildings. Members noted that once exceptional and non-recurrent expenditure, such as Union enlargements or other expenditure linked to the entry in force of the Treaty of Lisbon, European elections and the financing of building projects were taken out, it showed a decrease in Parliament's budget, stressing also that the Members' allowances had been frozen since 2011.

The Plenary also reiterated Parliaments' responsibility to **act in a sustainable way** and believed that the EMAS process needs continued support.

It also recalled that that the capacity to exercise scrutiny, as well as support to the Members, should be further improved to **strengthen Parliament's work as an institution vested with legislative and democratic scrutiny powers**. Parliament regretted the freezing of allocations for political groups, recalling that the latter were indispensable contributors when it came to Parliament's legislative and non-legislative work and its exercise of scrutiny.

In order to achieve Parliament's objectives, the following actions should be undertaken:

- develop a system of translation on demand by Members of committee amendments;
- explore possibilities for interinstitutional cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee;
- explore the offer of interpretation capacities to other institutions during off-peak times;
- migration from the present human resources management system, Streamline, to Sysper2;
- prepare for the more efficient structure of the working rhythm of the Parliament;
- prepare for a paperless Parliament, wherever possible, through best practice and the full implementation of the e-meetings project;
- develop a system of on-request interpretation for meetings other than the Plenary.

Parliament recalled that the cost-efficiency of interpretation must not erode the availability of live and accessible information across the Union, **considering that multilingualism and interpretation for web-streaming and Parliament transparency were of key importance for the public** and thus for the Members of the Parliament.

It reiterated that long-term investments, such as Parliament's building projects, needed to be handled prudently and transparently, asking for precise information on the progress of buildings projects and its financial implication to be provided. Similarly, it wanted more information on the creation of the new Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services on 1 November 2013 and recalled that it was created in a budgetary neutral way by redeployments from DGs PRES and IPOL. Parliament wanted information on the number of posts in the new Directorate in August/September 2014, as compared to the situation in January 2014.

Taking note of the fact that the opening of the European House of History was envisaged at the end of 2015, Parliament adopted the draft estimates for the financial year 2015, as set out in the Annex to the resolution.