2016 budget: estimates of revenue and expenditure, Section I - Parliament

2015/2012(BUD) - 27/04/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Gérard DEPREZ (ADLE, BE) on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016.

Members recalled that a budget of EUR 1 850 470 600 has been proposed by the Secretary-General for the Parliament's preliminary draft estimates for 2016, representing a 3.09% increase on the 2015 budget and 19.51% of heading V of the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework.

General framework and overall budget: Members recalled that, since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, significant additional expenditure has been borne by Parliament's budget, as a result of the following developments:

- the establishment of the European Parliament as a true co-legislator,
- the enhanced building policy (2010-2012),
- the accession of Croatia the House of European History (2013),
- the establishment of the Parliament's research service (2014-2015).

They welcomed that Parliament was able to offset a major part of this expenditure through savings. They considered that the newly elected Parliament should scrutinise in depth the implementation of those multiannual projects and decide, on this basis, on its own political priorities, including, if necessary, the negative ones. Members requested in this respect the Secretary-General to present an assessment report on those multiannual projects in due time before the Parliament's reading in autumn 2015.

Priorities: Members considered that for 2016 priority should be given to the **reinforcement of parliamentary work**, in particular by enhancing Parliament's legislative work as well as its capacity to scrutinise the executive, and the reinforcement of Parliament's security of buildings and cybersecurity.

They stated that Parliament should be exemplary, making particular efforts as regards the size of its budget and the level of increase in expenditure compared to 2015. They recalled **the substantial savings that could be made by having only one place of work instead of three (Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg).**

They welcomed that the share of Parliament's budget in the total MFF heading V was, with the exception of 2011 and 2014, below 20% during the past legislature. Members are of the opinion that the share of Parliament's budget in 2016 should also be maintained under 20%.

They set the level of its current/functioning expenditure for the year 2016 to EUR 1 823 648 600, which corresponds to 1.6% increase over the 2015 budget, and added to its draft estimates the exceptional extraordinary expenditure amounting to EUR 15 million requested in 2016 to reinforce the security of its buildings in Brussels as well as the cybersecurity of the Parliament.

Specific issues

Priority to parliamentary work: Members considered that in order to consolidate the role of the Parliament, the administrative capacity of the secretariats of the specialised parliamentary committees should, where it has not yet been done, be reinforced accordingly, by means of redeployment. They

stressed that a revision of Parliament´s Rules of Procedure governing questions for written answer can generate savings and will limit the administrative burden of the European institutions without endangering the legislative powers of the European Parliament.

Security and cyber security: Members emphasised that in the current context the highest priority should be given to the security of the Parliament's premises inside and outside, while remaining an “open-house” for European citizens.

Members were also of the opinion that, due to an increasing use of electronic media and equipment, particular attention should be paid to IT security to ensure the maximum possible level of security of its information and communication systems.

Building policy: Members reiterated that long-term investments, such as Parliament's building projects, need to be handled prudently and transparently. They insisted on strict cost management, project planning and supervision. They reiterated their call for a transparent decision-making process in the field of buildings policy. They invited the Vice Presidents responsible to present to the Committee in charge the new mid-term strategy on buildings as well as a progress report of the KAD building including financing options. On this basis, they will decide during the reading of the budget on the inclusion of financing for the KAD building in to Parliament budget 2016 taking into consideration possible savings in interest rates.

Communication: the committee stressed that the primary mandate of Members is legislative work. They considered, therefore, that for this purpose priority should be given to communication with the public and other stakeholders by the upgrading of technical equipment and media facilities given the increased media interest.

Staff measures: Members noted that for 2016 it is proposed to remove 57 posts from the establishment plan of the Parliament's Secretariat, which should save some EUR 1.8 million. They approved the proposal of the Secretary-General to create 25 additional posts to reinforce DG SAFE in order to improve the effectiveness of the security systems inside and outside the Parliament's premises, the buildings' fire prevention, as well as to ensure an appropriate protection for its Members, staff and high level guests on the Parliament's premises. They called on the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets a complete overview of the development of posts in Parliament and of how the 5% staff reduction target has been approached so far and how it will be achieved in time and which reference number of posts in the establishment plan is being used to implement this aim.

Taking account of these remarks, Members called on the European Parliament to adopt the draft estimates for the financial year 2016.