# 1996 budget: section III

1995/2234(BUD) - 12/12/1995

The rapporteur, Mr ELLES, pointed out that the agreement reached on the issue of legal bases would allow for more flexible frameworks for the implementation of Community programmes. He was also pleased that the budget provided for the streamlining of administrative expenditure. He noted that the 1996 budget would make it possible to clarify the use of the reserve (currently 0.5%, covering 41 budget lines); it would be used to control the agencies' funds and improve the procedure for the discharge of budgetary control. He also highlighted the importance of the progress made in the area of information policy, particularly in relation to the 'Citizens First' campaign, the single currency and the Intergovernmental Conference. He mentioned many initiatives towards which Parliament had taken a positive attitude during the debate on the budget: - consideration of environmental aspects in the operation of the Cohesion Fund and Structural Funds; - launch of the 'INTEGRA' programme to combat social exclusion; - increase in appropriations for the European Voluntary Service; - allocation of appropriations to the European Union Youth Orchestra; - doubling of funds for the twinning programme; - launch of the 'Citizens First' information campaign. Parliament had also supported the allocation of aid for the reconstruction of Sarajevo and funds for initiatives based on international cooperation. The Commissioner, Mr Liikanen, pointed out that the 1996 budget was the first budget to be approved not only for, but also by, the enlarged Union. The positions of Parliament and the Council were generally constructive and were very similar on agricultural spending and structural measures; there had even been agreement on the appropriations for fisheries agreements and the MEDA programme. Internal policies and external measures had caused some difficulties, but all of the institutions' priorities had been retained. As regards the specialist agencies, the Commission would present a report on the improvements requested. A solution had been found to the issue of financing cooperation with the Mediterranean countries, in accordance with the Cannes decisions. In the area of trans-European networks, there was still the risk of delays, which would prevent them from being implemented as quickly as had been hoped. In relation to the statute for parliamentary assistants, the Commission would continue its work and put forward proposals. Finally, as regards the repeal of the 1995 budget by the Court of Justice, an amending budget for 1995 would have to be adopted without delay and a solid basis established for the negotiations on the 1997 budget. An in-depth interinstitutional discussion on the classification of expenditure was therefore required.