2004 budget: others sections

2003/2002(BUD) - 07/03/2003

The Council has adopted the following conclusions on the guidelines for the 2004 EU budget. Firstly, it underlines the fact that the budgetary procedure for 2004 will be marked by two important challenges. Also, that this budget will be the first one adopted in accordance with the provisions of the new Financial Regulation and its establishment will require dealing with a new presentation on the basis of the "Activity Based Budgeting" method. It will also be the first budget that takes fully into account the forthcoming enlargement in the course of the year 2004. The Council underlines the need to respect the Financial Perspective. The Council stresses once again the importance of keeping a tight grip on payment appropriations for 2004, which should reflect a level of budgetary rigour similar to that being applied at national level. The level of payment appropriations entered in the budget should be based on realistic forecasts while being sufficient for fulfilling the different commitments undertaken by the European Union. AS regards the budget if the other institutions, the Council states that due to the constraints of Heading 5 (administrative expenditure), institutions are invited to establish rigorous draft estimates using, as much as possible, the redeployment of existing resources in order to leave sufficient margins under this Heading. In this context, the institutions should also be encouraged to strengthen their arrangements for interinstitutional co-operation. Taken together, these measures should result in budgetary savings and efficiency gains. It underlines the fact that the draft estimates presented by the institutions should clearly identify all costs related to the enlargement, in particular in the field of buildings and staff resources. It attaches great importance to the Commission's reform programme, including its financial implications, which should be guided by the principle of budgetary discipline. It furthermore recalls the principle of budgetary neutrality that was retained for the creation of executive agencies and European offices.