Budget 2000: Convention on the future of the European Union

2002/2234(BUD) - 21/10/2002 - Council draft budget

PURPOSE : to present the Convention budget for 2003. CONTENT : by their Decision of 21 February 2002 the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council set up a Fund for the financing of the Convention on the future of the European Union and laying down the financial rules for its management (OJ C 54, 1.3.2002, p. 1). The Interinstitutional Agreement of 28 February 2002 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission laid down the procedures for contributions to the Fund by the three Institutions (refer to ACI/2002/2045). The Budget for the Fund for the financial year 2002 was set at EUR 4 000 000. In the absence of precise information on the modus operandi of the Convention, this amount was estimated with several factors in mind such as the willingness of the three Institutions to bear the cost of expenditure linked to the infrastructure necessary for the operation of the Convention (sixth recital of the Interinstitutional Agreement); the need for the Fund Budget to cover, on the one hand, expenditure relating to the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Secretariat members not belonging to a Community institution and, on the other, miscellaneous operating expenditure not chargeable to the Institutions, in particular expenditure relating to the translation and publication of certain texts produced by the Convention and finally the likely duration of the Convention's proceedings, which was estimated at approximately one year. In reality, the budget granted for 2002 will be only partially used during the financial year. There are many reasons for this: - the proportion of infrastructure costs borne by the three Institutions, which exceeded forecasts, in particular as regards the premises and infrastructure for the Convention Secretariat and the translation of documents, so far provided entirely by the Council; as regards the plenary sessions, interpreting and drawing up of verbatim records, so far borne entirely by the European Parliament, with the result that it has not been necessary to call upon the appropriations entered in Chapter 21 of the Budget; - the fact that the duty travel expenses of Chairman Giscard d'Estaing and Vice-Chairman Amato are borne respectively by national transport companies and national authorities; - the fact that national officials seconded to the Convention Secretariat are paid by the civil service to which they belong; - the discipline exercised by the Secretariat in managing the appropriations entered in the Budget; - the fact that the Convention's proceedings will in the final analysis last longer than initially anticipated; this implies ipso facto that its recommendations will be published at a later stage in 2003 and the relevant appropriations have therefore not been committed. Nevertheless, the cost of publishing the recommendations, including in the languages of the candidate countries, will have to be met during 2003. Consequently and in accordance with Article 11(1) of the RGMS Decision of 21 February allows the automatic carry-over to the second financial year (2003) of all appropriations not committed at the end of the first financial year (2002). The budget estimates for 2003 therefore take into account the fact that it will be possible to fund a sizeable proportion ofcommitments contracted in 2003 from the appropriations carried over from 2002. The draft Budget for 2003 totals EUR 950 000 : this amount complies with the guidelines arrived at by the Secretaries-General of the three participating Institutions and the General Secretariat of the Convention at their meeting on the subject at the beginning of October and reflects the sums already entered in the respective sections of the 2003 PDB (Parliament: p.m.; Council: EUR 200 000; Commission: EUR 750 000) (Please refer to ACI/2002/2247). The forecasts of expenditure are divided up as follows: - Title 1 (Expenditure relating to the members and staff of the Convention): EUR 450 000 : this amount was calculated and spread over the various headings of the Title on the basis of actual expenditure during the period February-September 2002; - Title 2 (Operating expenditure): EUR 500 000 : this amount, which was divided between Chapter 22 - Brochures and Publications - and Chapter 24 - Infrastructure and Miscellaneous - is intended to cover mainly the costs of disseminating the Convention's recommendations; - Title 10 (Contingency reserve): p.m. It should be noted that the Secretary-General of the Convention agreed with the Secretaries-General of the three participating Institutions that calls for contributions to the 2003 Budget would be made only as and when necessary; consequently, if requirements were to prove lower than the estimates, the Institutions'

contributions would be reduced accordingly. However, if the Convention's proceedings were to extend beyond the beginning of the summer, the need for additional amounts might arise: in that case, it would be necessary to introduce an SAB.