1996 budget: section III

1995/2234(BUD) - 23/10/1995

The Committee has adopted the draft opinion of Mr. Karl-Heinz FLORENZ (D, EPP) on the draft budget 1996. The Committee followed her rapporteur in developing a new strategy of "greening" the budget to put into practice Article 130R of the Treaty and the EP resolution of 5 April 1995 on the guidelines for the 1996 budgetary procedure. Article 130R states that "Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of other Community policies" and in the above mentioned resolution Parliaments "requests that the Commission, through application of the principle of sustainable development, include environmental protection in Community policies, so that the impact on the environment of Community actions be taken into account before any appropriations are granted". Draftsman Florenz has taken this resolution seriously and has prepared a number of amendments which could considerably change the draft budget for 1996. His idea is not to find more funding for environmental policy. The aim of his amendments is to ensure that environmental concerns are taken into account into Community actions to avoid subsequent costly recovery operations and to prevent the loss of irreplaceable or non-renewable resources and values (depletion of environmental factors such as clean air, water and soil, the quality of life, public health, habitats, architectural monuments etc.). In short, "greening" should mean the introduction of procedures and mechanisms to avoid Community funding of unsustainable programmes and projects. But to modify every single budget line is an immense task and therefore Mr. Florenz got the Committee's support to make a start this year with two budget lines in the field of agriculture and with nearly all the budget lines of the Structural Funds and with the Cohesion Fund. Next year, internal and external policies as well as the other agricultural expenditure may follow. To bring budgetary preparation of programmes into the environmental context the Commission should adopt internal procedures which guarantee that environmental consideration are, better than at present, taken into account. An environmental impact statement should accompany every proposal to (co-)finance a programme or a project. To this end the "remarks" of the relevant budget line should be supplemented with the following sentence: "These appropriations may be used on condition that the projects are accompanied by an environment impact statement". The Committee calls on the Commission to present before 15 November 1995 a code of conduct for the application of these remarks. To finance measures in the field of implementation, monitoring and assessment, special budget lines should be created. The funding of these lines would be provided for by taking 0,1% of the budget lines concerned, B1-5013 and B2-1600. This would yield 1871 mEcu for B1-5013 and 29 021 950 for budget line B2-1600. For tobacco, the rapporteur had prepared amendments to transfer 10 million from the budget line premiums for tobacco to the budget lines for conversion premium and Community fund for research and information. These last two lines would get 5 mEcu more. He intended this amendments as a signal to the Council and the Commission that the union should rethink the subsidizing of a product that is so harmful to the health of our citizens and which leads to such high public health costs. But a Committee majority adopted amendments of PES and Green to stop all subsidies for the production of tobacco (1 billion Ecu).