2001 Budget: other sections

1999/2191(BUD) - 04/12/2000

The committee adopted the report drawn up by Jutta HAUG (PES, D) jointly with Markus FERBER (EPP-ED, D) on the 2001 budget. Although the Council had refused to revise the financial perspective, despite repeated requests by Parliament, the committee nevertheless welcomed the agreement reached at the budgetary conciliation meeting between Parliament's delegation and the Council on 23 November 2000 and in particular the use of the flexibility instrument. It agreed that the instrument should be mobilised for an amount of EUR 200m in commitment appropriations for Serbia, thus providing for a total amount of EUR 839m to be entered for the Balkan states, including EUR 240m for Serbia. Funding for the reconstruction of Kosovo within that total could therefore be maintained at the level provided for in the preliminary draft budget (PDB). The committee also noted that financing was guaranteed under heading 4 (external action) for Parliament's traditional priorities, such as cooperation with the countries of Latin America and Asia and South Africa, support for democratisation and human rights and cooperation with NGOs. Financing would also be guaranteed for the Rapid Reaction Facility proposed by the Commission. The committee confirmed that the overall increase in payment appropriations for 2001 would be limited to 3.5% in relation to 2000 and agreed to the rebudgetisation for 2002 and subsequent years of an amount of EUR 1600m in commitment appropriations for Community initiative programmes. It therefore accepted that payment appropriations for the 2001 budget in heading 2 would be EUR 700m lower than projected in the 2001 PDB. In line with Parliament's priorities, the committee also welcomed the agreement that had been reached on continuing the employment initiative created in 1998 and on an allocation of EUR 450m for the multiannual programme for enterprise and entrepreneurship (2001-2005), with a total of EUR 100m in commitment appropriations in 2001. The committee agreed to release the performance reserve for heading 4 and the reserve for Letter of Amendment 1/2001 created at Parliament's first reading. It confirmed Parliament's ongoing commitment to support the administrative reform of the Commission, including the creation of 500 new posts, and underlined the need to create an early retirement scheme to support the reform process. As agreement had been reached in a joint statement by Council, Commission and Parliament to establish performance conditions to improve the efficiency of the institutions, the committee called on the Commission to submit a progress report to Parliament by 30 June 2001, in the context of the 2002 budgetary procedure, on phasing out the commitment backlog by 2003; the implementation of performance targets in heading 4 and progress on limiting the duration of commitments; improvements in commitology; the state of affairs relating to the early retirement scheme; and improvements in simplifying and implementing programmes. Lastly, it agreed to adopt in one reading Letter of Amendment No. 2/2001 as amended by the Council and including an additional amount of EUR 60m for BSE tests.