2003 budget: other sections

2002/2005(BUD) - 26/02/2002

In adopting the report by Per STENMARCK (EPP-ED, S) on the budgetary guidelines for the Community institutions other than the Commission, the committee confirmed that preparing for EU enlargement would be the key political priority of the 2003 budget. This challenge would be all the more difficult given that no real progress had yet been achieved in the matter of institutional reform and, at the same time, the projected needs of all the institutions already exceeded the ceiling of Heading 5 (administrative expenditure) by EUR 140m. The committee therefore called on all institutions to clearly define their core activities and negative priorities. It also wanted the proposed interinstitutional recruitment system to be set up as soon as possible and expressed support for an early retirement scheme for officials. As far as Parliament was concerned (Section I), while endorsing the concept of "controlled multilingualism", the committee wanted parliamentarians from the candidate countries to participate as observers in the activities of the EP and said that more funds should be allocated to the secretariats of the political groups. It also stressed that compulsory mobility of staff should be applied "within reasonable conditions". Finally, it was in favour of measures to enhance the reach of Parliament's information policy with a view to both the forthcoming enlargement and also the 2004 elections, for example by broadcasting Parliament's debates live on the Internet. As far as the other sections were concerned, the committee expressed concern at the projected expansion of the Council's budget (Section II) concerning the second and third pillars, stressing that these activities were not traditional administrative expenditure and therefore remained excluded from the scope of the current "gentlemen's agreement". Lastly, the Court of Justice (Section IV) and the Court of Auditors (Section V) were urged to scale down their budgetary projections for the 2003 budget, along with the Economic and Social Committee (Section VI) whose dependence on external expertise, the committee felt, could compromise the legitimacy of that institution..