1998 budget: EP estimates

1997/2002(BUD) - 26/06/1997 - Parliament's opinion on budgetary estimates/guidelines

In adopting the report by Mr John TOMLINSON (PSE, UK) Parliament adopted the estimates of Parliament for the 1998 financial year totalling ECU 912 254 325 in expenditure and ECU 52 726 210 in own resources which corresponded to an allocation of 20.09% volume of expenditure allowed for in heading 5 'Administrative expenditure'. It provided for a volume for reuse estimated at ECU 3 143 280 and intended to amend the global amount with a view to reducing it below 20% of heading 5 'Administrative expenditure' in the first reading of the 1998 draft budget. Parliament insisted that proper procedures must be adhered to in any cases of public procurement by it through publicized calls for tender. It also pointed out that the 1998 financial year should support the cost of the lease for the D3 building for 12 months and for the IPE IV building in Strasbourg over eight and a half months. With regard to the staff in active employment, it maintained the establishment plan of the Secretariat at its current staffing level and created one temporary A7 post in the political groups' secretariat. It requested the working party on a statute for Members of the European Parliament to submit concrete proposals on travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure as soon as possible. With regard to the organization of work, it recalled the terms of its amendment concerning staff mission expenses and requested in particular that each institution attach to the annual estimate a statement justifying its request for appropriations for mission expenses. It provided for 11 five-day part-sessions in Strasbourg and 7 two-day part-sessions in Brussels as in 1997. It also considered that the expenditure on the financing of the translation and publication of the verbatim report of proceedings, which was politically justified, should be met in part by reducing the production and direct and indirect dissemination costs, without going back on the existing transparency and the current multilingual system. With regard to movements in appropriations, while regretting that the option of purchase through direct financing of Parliament's buildings was refused by the Council, agreed to the proposals for the early purchase through indirect financing of its buildings and land in Brussels and Strasbourg in order to reduce the call on contributions from the taxpayers of the Union over the medium term. It also wished to see the inclusion of the rental payments for the Belliard I +II buildings for a transitional year and the surrender of the MAE building to the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee with effect from 1 January 1998. It stressed in particular that the occupation of Parliament's future new buildings (D3 and IPE IV) should not involve too much extra cost when the removal takes place. It also called for a clear and comprehensive action plan on investment in information technology to be drawn up, defining the aims to be achieved and the financial means needed, and providing for a system of open access to information (for citizens, journalists, etc.). It requested the Secretary-General to explore the possibility of real joint management (Administration-Staff Committee) of the appropriations entered in the Articles 'Special assistance grants' and 'Welfare expenditure'. It once again expressed its reservations on the Epicentre project, for which appropriations remained in reserve and entered ECU 1 225 000 for its development until a programme of action had been agreed to ensure essential library and documentation services. Parliament also entered ECU 1 200 000 for restaurants and canteens until details were provided, before Parliament's first reading in October, on the direct and indirect subsidy granted to these services. It instructed its Secretary-General to review, in the context of interinstitutional cooperation, the operational arrangements of the staff shops in the various places of work with the aim of achieving economies of scale in the budget of the Union. Lastly, it called for a complete list of regularly renewable contracts for which Parliament was responsible and that pass before the Advisory Committee on Procurements and Contracts. With regard to the Ombudsman's budget, it noted that the estimates amounted to ECU 2 636 002 and noted the request for the creation of one A7 post (informatics work) and the upgrading of 1 C3 to C2 and 2 C5 to C4 posts. It reserved the right to reexamine these proposals during the first reading of the budget.