1996 budget: section III

1995/2234(BUD) - 26/10/1995 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr ELLES (PPE, UK), the European Parliament approved the general budget for 1996 (Section III - Commission). . General: In the first part of its resolution Parliament regretted that all Member States had still not ratified the conclusions agreed in Edinburgh on own resources and called for this ratification to take place as soon as possible. Parliament stressed that it had scrupulously followed the guidelines set out in April 1995 and had begun to establish a close link between the implementation of the current year's budget and the proposals for the first reading of the subsequent budget. In this respect Parliament had decided to strengthen controls on the use of funds and called for the use of the reserve and the freezing of funds to be subject to detailed examination between then and 30.05.1996. In addition, the Commission was called on to provide information as soon as possible to the CEECs on the possible enlargement of the European Union and on the efforts which the Community would be making in this area. * Legal bases: Parliament regretted that the Commission had decided arbitrarily (without prior consultation) to delete certain actions and pilot projects, for want of legal bases to support them. In this respect Parliament called for a global agreement between the 2 branches of the budgetary authority so that a solution might be found to this problem by way of an institutional trialogue. * Budget: - Heading I: Parliament was keeping to the agreement concluded on 24.07.1995 as far as agricultural expenditure was concerned, but thought it inappropriate that the guideline value be increased after the actual presentation of the draft budget. It also pointed out that savings of ECU 60 m would have to be made in the area of land set-aside, a sum which was to be transferred to programmes relating to the improvement of production; - Heading II: Parliament again deplored the gaps in the supply systems (particularly for Objective 1) and approved the decision to use appropriations from the reserve for Community initiatives under budget heading B0-40; - Heading III: . as far as networks were concerned, Parliament noted that appropriations for 1995 had remained at a very low level and approved the allocation of ECU 280 m for trans-European networks (B5-700), of which 25% was to be placed in reserve, . culture, education and the media: Parliament called for real efforts to be made to promote sports and to improve tolerance in European societies, . information: noting the beginnings of a process of cooperation between the different services operated by the Community institutions, Parliament regretted that the proposal to set up a new interinstitutional information system had not been more clearly defined. Synergies should therefore be put in place based on human and financial resources, and this should also include relations between Parliament and the Commission. Parliament gave particular approval to an amendment which sought to provide citizens with specific information on achievements and on the acquis (the PRINCE programme). The appropriations earmarked for this programme are placed in reserve pending a decision, . Agencies: while supporting specialist EU agencies, Parliament pointed out that these bodies should respect budget constraints and could not extend their activities and budgets without actual proof of their needs. It proposed that all the agencies make the necessary amendments to their rules of procedure so that they might have access to the global reserve for agencies, . environment: while welcoming the fact that actions in this field should help support sustainable development, Parliament called on the Commission to present a code of conduct between then and 08.12.1995 which would integrate the environmental dimension into Community policies. To this effect it set out a number of principles which should help in drawing up the said code (particularly in respect of appropriations allocated under the Structural Funds, appropriations made within the framework of major Community projects and programmes, and new programmes which should respect the environmental principles of the CAP, the energy policy, the Natura 2000 network and the Directive on habitats); - Heading IV : Parliament strongly endorsed the decision to release ECU 35 m for the reconstruction of Sarajevo and ECU 15 m for other regions of the former Yugoslavia. While accepting the amounts allocated to PHARE, TACIS and MEDA for the period 1996-1999, it called for these sums to be subject to strict controls (regular reports are to be submitted on the impact of the projects and their assessment). Parliament asked that a separate budget heading be set up for the CFSP and called on the Council to respect the Treaty on European Union as far as joint actions were concerned (it rejected the practice of disregarding budget decisions as was the case when releasing funds for Mostar). It also

called on the Commission to provide detailed information on the implementation of the budget line for South Africa (B7-5070) and proposed that new budget headings be established in the fishery sector for international agreements, for financial protocols and for fishery contributions, in order to increase budget transparency. - Heading V : Parliament decided that 10% of the funding provided for the Commission's external delegations should be placed in a special reserve and should only be released once an agreement was reached on the composition and financing of the supervisory personnel in those countries benefitting under the PHARE and TACIS schemes. Parliament also called for a study of the rules laid down for external delegation personnel, specifying the distribution of officials, local agents and non-statutory personnel, the distribution of different sources of expenditure and the transparency of controls. In addition, Parliament decided to create new budget lines for the anti-dumping sector and supported the strategy adopted for combatting fraud. The cost of missions undertaken by Commissioners was to be placed in a reserve and Parliament also asked that it be kept regularly informed of the remunerations and repayments received by Commissioners, particularly within the framework of their participation in official events. At the same time, Parliament welcomed the introduction of the GEMINI programme (twinning of towns in Europe with those in the east) and the efforts which had been made in respect of interinstitutional cooperation on the administration of the budget.