1996 budget: other sections

1995/2235(BUD) - 26/10/1995 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr MIRANDA DA SILVA (GUE, P) the European Parliament approved the Community budget for 1996 (Section I - European Parliament/Ombudsman, Section II - Council, Section IV - Court of Justice, Section V - Court of Auditors, Section VI - Economic and Social Committee /Committee of the Regions). * General: In the first part of its resolution, Parliament recalled that as far as appropriations were concerned, the budget year 1996 provided for an increase in funding of 4.20% over 1995. It underlined in particular that the 1996 draft budget had left a margin of approximately ECU 60 m in heading 5, that the projections for the institutions varied from -9% to + 15% in comparison with 1995 and that the Council had drawn up the draft budget at slightly more than ECU 4 billion, leaving a margin of ECU 169 m. Parliament decided to include provisional appropriations in the form of rent for Parliament itself (ECU 37.7 m) and for the Court of Justice (ECU 60 m), with a reserve of ECU 10 m. With regard to EU staffing levels, and taking initial note of the decision of the Council to create 42 jobs in its general secretariat and 6 for the Committee of the Regions (temporary staff plus 22 upgrades), Parliament decided to introduce reserve appropriations for the creation of a budgetary structure capable of taking account of measures introduced by the Council to cut back on officials as a result of enlargement. As regards interinstitutional cooperation, and convinced of the usefulness of this mechanism, Parliament took the view that savings had to be made in the area of administrative expenditure. Amendments have been adopted in this regard. Appropriations have also been included under budget heading 100 (provisional appropriations) for activities such as recruitment and professional training. * Section II - European Parliament: Taking the view that the volume of appropriations was sufficient to ensure the smooth operation of the EP, Parliament regretted that no common legal and language service had been established for the 3 institutions and felt obliged to push ahead with this in order that it might be able fully to exercise its legislative prerogatives. At the same time it decided: . to create one permanent A1 post as head of the Epicentre; . to create seven LA7 posts for the legal and language service; . to create two LA3 posts in the interpreting department (for new Member States); . to upgrade certain posts in the political groups. Parliament also included a number of allocations designed to regulate the problems of internal organisations (such as the hiring of transport, secretarial allowances for MEPs, voluntary pension scheme for Members and free-lance interpreters). Parliament repeated its call for a solution to be found to the problem of a Statute for Parliamentary Assistants in the very near future. * Section IV, Court of Justice: Parliament pointed out first and foremost that this institution had called for the creation of 21 jobs and the upgrading of 110 others, without any note accompanying or justifying this request. Parliament decided to reduce the basic allowance from 6.5% to 4.5% for personnel working for this institution and proposed creating three temporary A6 jobs as well as upgrading several other lower-grade positions. It also decided to strengthen a number of other purely technical lines (expenditure on meetings and charges for cleaning, stationery and telephone services). * Section V, Court of Auditors: Here too the level of appropriations was considered as satisfactory, though Parliament stressed that it was necessary to provide budget coverage for jobs which were actually paid over a period of 12 months. It decided to reduce the basic allowance from 7% to 5% for personnel working for the Court of Auditors. * Section VI : a) ESC: Parliament recalled its position on the management of human resources, particularly with a view to establishing a functional and transparent organisational structure within this institution. At the same time it decided to upgrade 2 posts and to create a permanent grade A position. For the rest, the budget allocated to this institution was satisfactory (except for the addition of ECU 74,300 for study purposes). b) Committee of the Regions: Parliament was concerned that the Committee of the Regions should be given sufficient human and infrastructure resources to support the activities of this institution. It subscribed to the creation of six temporary A7 posts and took the view that the budget for the Committee of the Regions was adequate, apart from the extra ECU 30,000 granted to cover the cost of meetings, official missions and studies. c) joint organisational structure: Parliament pointed out that the Council had included ECU 300,000 for rental charges in anticipation of the hiring of Parliament meeting rooms and decided, in this context, to create a new heading "expenses for meetings in the premises of other institutions" (ECU

97,000) and to adjust, as a result of this, the appropriations for "rental charges" introduced by the Council into the corresponding heading. Finally, for the institutions as a whole, Parliament noted that the procedure for drawing up administrative budgets other than that of the Commission tended towards a convergence of views between the two branches of the budgetary authority. This convergence, when coupled with real interinstitutional cooperation, would be felt in practice by the saving of one reading of the draft budget. Parliament also wished to see greater transparency between the two branches of the budgetary authority as regards the dissemination of information. Parliament noted, finally, that the budget as amended left a margin, all institutions taken together, of ECU 61.5 m on "administrative expenditure". In this respect it appended to its resolution a series of conclusions on the rationalisation of administrative expenses (creation of jobs, organisation of competitions, language training, etc.). It called in particular for a sector-by-sector rationalisation of administrative expenditure and greater transparency in respect of the resources allocated to each heading and the means provided for financing the various sectors concerned (competitions, planning of requirements, etc.).