2000 budget : section III

1998/2186(BUD) - 28/10/1999 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted its resolution on the 2000 Budget, Section III. Its rapporteur was Mr. Jean-Louis BOURLANGES (EPP, F). The Parliament voted through a series of amendments to bring the new figures for EU expenditures in 2000 up to 93.5 billion euros in commitments and 91.4 billion in payments. The Parliament confirmed its commitment to the Inter- Institutional Agreement (IIA), but is concerned at the growing disparity between the needs to be covered by the EU budget, which are increasing as a result of the extension in powers provided for by the Treaty of Amsterdam and the planned geographical enlargement of the EU, and the structural contraction of Community spending resulting from the financial perspective, contraction being reflected in a regular reduction in the percentage of GDP allocated to the Community budget. It, therefore, deplores the Council's tendency to have new priorities financed by unjustifiably sacrificing traditional priorities. It takes the view that the principle of sufficient resources must be fully respected, since the EU must have the financial resources needed to realise its ambitions and address the new challenges now facing it. It points out that the 2000 budgetary procedure has seen the emergence of major needs which were not taken into account either in the financial perspective annexed to the IIA of 06/05/1999 or in the preliminary draft budget submitted by the Commission. It underscores its determination to ensure that the 2000 budget finances the new priorities, i. e.: - participation in the Kosovo reconstruction effort (500 million euros); - conclusion of a fair fisheries agreement with Morocco (125 million euros); - the Union's financial contribution to Turkey in response to the earthquake damage (50 million euros); and - Europe's financial contribution to East Timor (50 million euros). It regards these new needs as an essential priority for the 2000 budget and calls on the Commission to submit a proposal to revise the financial perspective, and the Council to agree to it. It points out to the Commission that the EP's first reading has greatly helped to give backing to the position set out in the PDB by deleting most of the cuts made by the Council. Parliament supports the Commission's figures for agriculture and regional and social spending, where it has re-inserted the cuts made by the Council. Members also voted to increase funding for the school milk programme. As far as other budgetary lines are concerned, Parliament has voted for increases in the Youth and Culture and Environment budgets, and has supported expenditure to allow other projects to go ahead in the new Third Pillar area of freedom, security and justice. MEPs also want the Commission to come forward with more information with regard to research spending. As regards administrative expenditure, MEPs want to see the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts put into place as as possible, starting with the phasing out of the technical assistance offices responsible for organisingforeign aid. MEPs also called for 75 extra posts for the anti-fraud office, OLAF.