2003 budget: section III, Commission

2002/2004(BUD) - 12/03/2002 - Parliament's opinion on budgetary estimates/guidelines

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 2003 budget guidelines, Section III, drafted by Göran Farm (PES, Sweden). (Please refer to the document dated 26/02/02). It regards enlargement as the top political priority for 2003, and stated its concern about the need to finance the preparatory work within the ceiling of heading 5. The other political priorities are reform of the institutions, external assistance with particular reference to Afghanistan, internal security and reform of the Commission. On sectoral issues: - Heading 1: agriculture. Apart from a mid-term review of Agenda 2000, and the issue of transferring unused funds, Parliament asked the Commission to allocate adequate funds to heading B1-332 (Emergency Fund for veterinary complaints). - Heading 2: Structural Funds. Bearing in mind the need to avoid a further increase in the backlog of payments, the Commission is asked to present an evaluation on the major problems and bottlenecks country by country in view of possible corrective measures by 30 June 2002. Parliament must be given a leading role in monitoring the implementation of funds. - Heading 3: Internal policies. The preparation of enlargement needs to be taken into account under heading 3, and adequate resources must be made available for the development of social dialogue in the accession countries. Parliament also expressed its determination to set up a WTO Parliamentary Assembly, and to ensure that sufficient appropriations become available to provide for the adequate preparation of its delegations in all preparatory meetings. - Heading 4:External actions. The importance of effective implementation of the budget was emphasised. With regard to development aid, the Commission must evaluate its impact on poverty eradication building on the agreed new benchmark system. Support for Afghanistan was also underlined. Parliament expressed its concern about developments in the Middle East, in particular the worsening of the Palestinian people's social and economic conditions and Israel's destruction of basic infrastructure, some financed by the EU, in the territories of the Palestinian Authority. - Heading 5: Administrative expenditure. There is a tight margin under heading 5 in 2003 and 2004 resulting from new needs, such as preparation for enlargement, future pension needs, Members' Statute, the functioning of new bodies (Convention, Data Protection) and the entry into force of the Nice Treaty creating new structures and bodies. There must be immediate action on finding methods for savings through interinstitutional cooperation as well as for the pensions problem. Agreement must be reached with the Council on the consideraiton of enlargement expenditure in relation to the current ceiling of heading 5. Significant savings from negative priorities should be found, but a secure level of functioning for the institutions must be maintained. - Heading 6: reserves. Parliament believes that the ceiling fixed by the IIA for the guarantee reserve can no longer cover the needs. The likely margin in 2003 only leaves a limited lending capacity for new developments. - Heading 7: Pre-accession. The Commission must accelerate the procedures for SAPARD and ISPA in cooperation with the relevant administrative bodies in the candidate countries.