2001 Budget: other sections

1999/2191(BUD) - 30/03/2000 - Parliament's opinion on budgetary estimates/guidelines

The European Parliament adopted its resolution drafted by Mr. Markus FERBER (EPP/ED, D), on the 2001 budgetary guidelines - other sections. Parliament points out that the policy of budgetary rigour will also apply in the 2001 budget and that setting priorities amongst the needs of the various institutions continues to be extremely important, to avoid the ceiling of heading 5 expenditure being reached. It emphasises that every request for additional expenditure has to be duly justified, and may, in principle, be granted only for new tasks, and in respect of requests for new staff, only where redeployment is not possible. It asks the institutions to consider the administrative, budgetary and financial implications of the forthcoming enlargement with particular reference to staffing requirements, office space, and the need to refurbish buildings currently in use. It welcomes the White Paper on Commission reform and considers that general principles of reform have to apply to all institutions in order to increase transparency, responsibility and accountability to European citizens. It considers that in parallel with the administrative reform under way in the Commission, the other institutions should improve the management of their own human and financial resources. It calls on the Commission to propose that a capital-based pension system for Community officials be set up. With specific reference to the Parliament, it notes that owing in particular to the increase in Parliament's powers resulting from the Amsterdam Treaty, the workload of Members has seriously increased over recent years and that for Members to fulfil their mandate they require adequate resources. Parliament instructs its Secretary-General to submit an assessment of the 2000 mobility exercise before 01/04/2001, as well as to ensure that future privatisation and/or outsourcing of services is cost-effective, and maintains a high level of quality of service. It also instructs its Secretary-General to submit by 01/07/2000 a report on the progress made in inter-institutional cooperation in the property sector - to include a quantitative assessment of future office space requirements - and of the state of play in the negotiations with the Luxembourg authorities. The implications of the large number of experts employed in the Parliament's administration and in the political groups on the basis of outside contracts also need to be examined, as well as alternatives in the data processing sector. The Secretaries-General of the Parliament, Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee are called upon to submit a report by 30/06/2000 setting out those areas such as interpretation where a common use of services might be useful to the institutions. Parliament asks the Commission to make a critical review of the allowances and the arrangements for the reimbursement of expenses set out in Annex VII to the Staff Regulations, since some of them no longer appear to be justified. It also asks the Commission to submit before 01/09/2000 a legislative proposal on the statute of, and for financial support to be provided to, European political parties, given that they 'contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressingthe political will of the citizens of the Union'. The Court of Justice is called upon to submit in good time before the EP's first reading of the 2001 budget an analysis on its future human and financial resources requirements with a view to the upcoming enlargement and the expected increase in the Court's workload. The Court of Auditors is asked to bring its standard abatement into line with the number of vacant posts. The CoR and ESC are urged to do their utmost to conclude the negotiations with the owner of the Belliard building as quickly as possible. They are also called on to enter travel and daily allowances for its Members under Chapter 10 (Members of the Institution), as the other institutions do, rather than under budget line 250 (Meetings in general). The Committee of the Regions is asked to bring its costs for auxiliary agents into line with those of the other institutions by applying the principle of permanent posts for permanent tasks, and to make the necessary changes to the establishment plan in its estimates for 2001 accordingly. The Parliament stresses that although the Ombudsman's budget became an independent section of the general budget of the Communities as of the 2000 budget, this should not lead to staff increases in the administrative, budgetary and financial sectors.