2004 budget: EP's estimates

2003/2016(BUD) - 14/05/2003 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report by Neena GILL (PES, UK) on Parliament's estimates for 2004. (Please refer to the document dated 29/04/03). On the matter of expenditure related to Members, Parliament agreed to enter an amount of EUR 46 256 289 against Chapter 102 ("Reserve for the Statute of Members") on the assumption that it will be in force from July 2004 onwards. As a measure of budgetary rigour, it decided to cover this expenditure within the self-imposed ceiling of 20% of heading 5 in the 2004 Budget for the time being; Parliament reserves its position as to whether this expenditure should continue to be covered within the 20% ceiling in future budgets. Parliament went on to point out that enlargement expenditure will be the subject of a Supplementary and Amending Budget to the 2004 Budget. At this stage, Members are unwilling to enter appropriations against Item 1100 ("Basic salaries") and related items to cover the cost of permanent officials for the posts in the Administration in the 2004 Budget, in addition to funding to be entered for auxiliary contracts. On improving service to Members, Parliament stated that the current proposals are a first step in the right direction, but noted that they are not as ambitious as could have been expected in the follow-up to the ROME-PE exercise. The proposals should lead also to more rationalisation and to leaner management structures, while maintaining the respective roles of the administration and the political groups and promoting equal opportunities. Moving on to information policy, Parliament felt that its Administration and its parliamentary delegations should make more use of video-conferencing. Whilst personal contact between politicians cannot be replaced, video-conferencing could lead to a more regular dialogue and reduce mission expenses. The Secretary-General is asked to follow technological developments closely with a view to ensuring that Members are provided with appropriate means of video-communication and other IT tools. Parliament remained concerned at the fact that IT expenditure in Parliament remains relatively high, especially if compared with other European institutions, and the Secretary-General is asked to present a report by 1 September 2003 on a multi-annual plan on all envisaged IT expenditure. Finally, Parliament stated its determination to ensure that sufficient appropriations are made available to provide for the adequate participation in the WTO Parliamentary Assembly, with the necessary infrastructure, of its delegations in all meetings of, or leading up to, such an assembly.