2004 budget: others sections

2003/2002(BUD) - 23/10/2003 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

By adopting the report by Mrs Neena Gill (PES, UK), the European Parliament gave its opinion at first reading on the draft budget for the year 2004 (other sections). Parliament notes that a considerable margin is still available under the heading 5 ceiling for the financial year 2004 and points out that this has been made possible not only due to the revision of the financial perspective, but also due to institutions having been given the means to prepare for enlargement in previous financial years, notwithstanding the fact that, before the latest revision, the ceiling for heading 5 had not yet been adjusted to cater for enlargement. It also takes note of the third report of the Secretaries-General of the institutions on trends in heading 5 and on interinstitutional cooperation. It considers that the report has provided a useful overview on likely movements in the main cost factors, including buildings and personnel, as was requested by the budgetary authority. It points out, however, that a considerable increase in buildings expenditure can be expected in 2007, as the financing of buildings currently under construction to cater for enlargement will begin; requests that an assessment of the Translation Centre and a forecast of its possible future be submitted to its Committee on Budgets by 15 November 2003 at the latest. The Secretaries-General of all institutions are invited to implement the appropriate measures against all types of discrimination as provided for in Article 13 of the Treaty; insists that special attention should be given to the principle of equal opportunities, in particular in the areas of recruitment and appointment to senior posts. Parliament is disappointed, on the one hand, by the fact that the institutions have not taken full advantage of the opportunity to rationalise their working methods and identify activities which could be discontinued, with a view to increasing value for money; endorses, on the other hand, the approach taken by the Council to limit the increase in the total number of C and B posts to a more acceptable level, including within its own establishment plan. It is noted that not all the consequences of the revision of the Staff Regulations can be incorporated at this stage of the procedure and that an amending budget will be required in 2004 (for measures such as changes to establishment plans). It urges the Commission to take the parliamentary calendar for 2004 into consideration when it presents its proposal. Parliament deals with each institution as follows: - Section I - European Parliament : the Parliament endorses the objectives envisaged in the 'Raising the Game' exercise, which aims to provide Members with a more efficient service in an enlarged Parliament. It also takes note of the report submitted on the development of the concept of 'full controlled multilingualism'. The House is satisfied that an agreement has been reached with the Luxembourg authorities concerning the purchase of the Konrad Adenauer Building, for which provision was made in the 2003 budget. It also welcomes the progress achieved in the negotiations with the French authorities as regards the final investment cost of the Louise Weiss Building. Parliament remains supportive of the Europe House framework andinvites its competent body to ensure that it is also applied in the information offices in the new Member States. It takes the view, in this context, that the policy of rationalising offices should continue to be promoted so as to avoid the duplication of functions and cost between Commission and Parliament information offices in the acceding countries and in the Member States, including in the regional offices. The Institutions are invited to extend the use of synergies to their headquarters structures (press rooms, etc.). The European Parliament has decided to release EUR 2.5 million from the reserve entered against Item 2100 (Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work). It notes the report submitted by the administration on the estimated movement in IT expenditure, which concludes that overall IT expenditure will remain stable at 2004 levels over the period 2004-2007. It remains concerned by the fact that Parliament continues to have too many separate systems, which has a negative impact on productivity, working processes and cost. It welcomes the planned development of a new system to allow Members and officials to access Parliament's internal systems remotely and invites its administration to examine the possible advantages of Linux for Parliament's IT landscape. Parliament has also decided to enter an additional allocation of EUR 1.3 million for the installation of a third computer in Members ' offices in Brussels upon request. Parliament has decided to make the necessary appropriations available for the following establishment plan measures: - creation of 355 posts to cater for enlargement; creation of 26 posts for "Raising the Game"; creation of 24 posts in the reserve for new

committee secretariats and 3 A7 posts in the reserve for the legal service; creation of 15 various other posts. Parliament has decided to enter EUR 5 million against Item 1111 (Auxiliary staff for enlargement), which increases the total allocation for this item to EUR 40 million. It has on the other hand, decided to reduce the allocation entered against Item 1301 (Mission expenses) by EUR 1 million, as the June 2004 European Parliament elections will lead to a reduction in the total number of staff missions, despite the enlargement-related growth of Parliament's establishment plan as a result of enlargement. Parliament has decided to transfer an allocation of EUR 46.2 million from Chapter 102 (Reserve for the Statute for Members) to Article 209 (Provisional appropriation to cover the institution's property investments), as it is now clear that the Statute for Members will not enter into force in the financial year 2004. Parliament invites its Secretary-General and the Bureau to continue exploring which activities can be discontinued or further rationalised; requests its Secretary-General, in addition, to report on the state of affairs concerning Parliament's participation in the EU's Eco-Mangement and Audit Scheme (EMAS); also takes the view that parliamentary bodies should meet primarily in one of the three working places, as the cost of meetings elsewhere will be increasingly difficult to justify in view, inter alia, of the increasing cost of multilingualism. Parliament also considers that the current situation in Parliament's main canteen is very difficult for Members and staff and points out that it will become increasingly difficult whenenlargement takes place. It invites its competent authorities to consider the reintroduction of a system of time slots for access to Parliament's main canteen, taking into account, above all, the needs of Members and in-house staff. Concern is also shown in relation to security both on and around its premises and the competent authorities are invited to further improve the current security arrangements, by introducing new technologies and professional skills. It invites its Secretary-General to examine how the security arrangements concerning access to its garages need to be improved, for instance by means of scanning devices. - Section II - Council: Parliament welcomes the transfer of expenditure on EU Special Representatives from the Council's to the Commission's budget (Policy Area 19), as Parliament has consistently requested, which corresponds to a saving of EUR 3.1 million in Section II. It invites the Council to re-examine the usefulness and added value of maintaining representations in Geneva and New York, in particular in view of the cost of posts and office space and recalls that Commission delegation premises may also be used by the Council and Parliament. Lastly, it notes that the Council has presented no frontloading operation for the 2004 budget. Further, it has decided, in accordance with the gentlemen's agreement between the Council and Parliament, not to amend the Section II draft budget concerning administrative expenditure; - Section IV - Court of Justice : the Parliament has decided to increase appropriations for auxiliary staff by EUR 150 000 and has decided to endorse the EUR 12.6 million frontloading operation concerning the Court's premises; - Section V - Court of Auditors : Parliament takes note that the Court of Auditors' requests were moderate in comparison to those made by other institutions. It has endorsed a series of requests rejected by the Council concerning 23 upgradings, 8 ad personam upgradings and the creation of 1 B5 post for the Market Unit and 7 C5 posts for enlargement; - Section VI - European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) : Parliament considers that the EESC should reorganise its services in order to reduce the pressure of enlargement, making the best use of the appropriations entered in the budget, especially within the linguistic departments and in the field of external expertise; - Section VII - Committee of the Regions (CoR) : Parliament has decided to endorse, as for the other institutions, the upgradings rejected by the Council and it has also decided to scale down some CoR requests such as those concerning appropriations for the building sector; - Section VIII (A) - Ombudsman - and Section VIII (B) - European Data Protection Supervisor : Parliament has decided to restore part of the cuts made by Council concerning Article A-270 (expenditure on publishing and information) and Article A-1875 (translation and interpretation costs). Equally it has decided to make the appropriations available for the creation of a C5 post.