# 2007 budget: European Parliament's estimates

2006/2022(BUD) - 15/05/2006

The committee adopted the report by Louis GRECH (PES, MT) on the estimates of revenue and expenditure of the European Parliament for the financial year 2007. It began by noting that Parliament's Bureau had proposed that 2007 should be "a year of spending consolidation with no major new projects". It said that enlargement of the Union remained a "key political priority" and that the other priorities of the 2007 budget would be information policy, assistance to Members and the policy to purchase buildings permanently occupied at the three working places.

The committee stressed the need to carry out a cost-benefit analysis for Parliament to assess the implications of retaining the self-imposed ceiling of Heading 5 (administrative expenditure). It decided that, should the ceiling of 20% be retained, "the 20% should constitute the upper limit of the Budget", and therefore reserved its position on the 20% limit until the first reading..

Among other points, the report said that, with the exception of enlargement-related posts and a limited number of specialised posts, "no further creation of new posts shall take place in 2007". MEPs also reaffirmed their position that "the European Parliament must have a strong and effective information strategy that breaks down barriers between Parliament and its electorate". While welcoming the more user-friendly look of Parliament's website, they wanted access to and navigation within the website to be improved, in particular for the non-expert public.

The report also stressed that the policy of purchasing property, and the practice of accelerated payments for these buildings, had served Parliament well. It added that any final package agreed on for the purchase of the WIC and SDM buildings in Strasbourg should "give value for money" to Parliament.

Lastly, while acknowledging that multilingualism was a "*sine qua non* condition for the Institution and its Members", the committee recognised the high cost involved in maintaining such a vast translation and interpretation service and of controlling expenditure, and urged that the Code of Multilingualism be observed by all stakeholders, especially in the planning of meeting slots. It also called on the Bureau to take a "prudent approach" when deciding on the introduction of extra working languages other than official languages.