2008 budget: the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy Report (APS)

2007/2017(BUD) - 29/03/2007

The committee adopted the report by Kyösti VIRRANKOSKI (ALDE, FI) on the Commission's annual policy strategy (APS) for the 2008 budget procedure. The report noted that 2007 would see the start of preparatory work on the 2008-2009 full, wide-ranging review (mid-term review) of the 2007-2013 multi-annual financial framework (MFF).

The committee underlined once again "the importance that it attaches to EU spending programmes effectively delivering on the political objectives which they were legislated to achieve". It affirmed its intention, therefore, to give to its work on the 2008 budget the philosophy of a 'budget for results'. The committee also underlined the importance of monitoring budget implementation as a tool for examining the delivery of policy.

The committee stressed that an effective and cost-efficient administrative system for the EU must be equipped with the necessary level of resources, and was keen to see the results of the screening exercise, due to be presented on 30 April 2007, carried out by the Commission services on the Commission's real staff needs. It welcomed the further indications in the 2008 APS of the Commission's efforts to re-direct its human resources towards political priorities, but rejected "the presentation of these priorities according to the labels prosperity, solidarity, security and external projection".

MEPs in the committee expressed their concern that the expansion of existing decentralised agencies would reduce the margins available under the headings of the MFF.

Among the specific points raised in the report, the committee highlighted the fact that energy efficiency is "a highly future-oriented priority" for tackling the problem of climate change. It agreed that such a policy requires a cross-cutting strategy and asked the Commission to continue to take "decisive actions" towards this aim. The report welcomed the Commission's intention to undertake key actions in the field of research and innovation to bring forward the implementation of the Lisbon strategy in 2008, and supported, in particular, the preparatory work in order to ensure that a decision to set up a European Institute of Technology (EIT) is adopted in the course of 2007.

The committee also wanted "precise proposals" from the Commission as regards the mid-term review of the common agricultural policy. Lastly, it said that the "core business" of communication and information policy is to inform EU citizens about the actions and programmes realised by the EU and the improvements generated over the last years, and that the campaign on political priorities should be defined at a later stage of the budgetary procedure taking into account Parliament's priorities.