

## 10. 2002 budget guidelines: other sections

A5-0103/2001

**European Parliament resolution on the guidelines for the 2002 budgetary procedure: Section II – Council; Section IV – Court of Justice; Section V – Court of Auditors; Section VI – Economic and Social Committee; Section VII – Committee of the Regions, and Section VIII – Ombudsman and on the European Parliament’s preliminary draft estimates (Section I) for 2002 (2000/2325(BUD))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2001 <sup>(1)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Court of Auditors’ Annual Report concerning the financial year 1999, together with the institutions’ replies <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure <sup>(3)</sup>,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets and the opinions of the Committee on Petitions and of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (A5-0103/2001),
- A. whereas the provisional figures for the technical adjustment of the financial perspective project a ceiling of € 5 179 million for heading 5 (*‘Administrative expenditure’*) in the 2002 budget <sup>(4)</sup>,

### **All institutions**

1. Calls on all institutions to apply rigorous budgets with sound financial management; recalls the fact that the margin under the ceiling for heading 5 (*‘Administrative expenditure’*) is under increasing pressure and urges all institutions to further improve their value for money;
2. Invites all institutions to further examine how to improve their management and increase efficiency and transparency through the use of Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB) and Activity-Based Management (ABM); calls on the institutions to define their core tasks and negative priorities to facilitate more efficient use of budget resources and, furthermore, to explore the entire scope for redeployment, with a view to optimising the allocation of staff, before requesting additional manpower; requests that all institutions submit by March 2002 a report outlining the implementation of the promotions policies adopted;
3. Agrees that an early retirement scheme with clearly established criteria would, within a system of Activity-Based Budgeting and Activity-Based Management, provide all the institutions with an important staff policy instrument suitable for further increasing the efficiency of the administration; points out that the detailed implementing arrangements, which ought to be laid down in consultation with staff representatives, should be commensurate with the institutions’ requirements without breaching rights enshrined in the Staff Regulations;
4. Urges the Secretaries-General of all institutions to continue examining the full scope for interinstitutional cooperation in the area of staff policy too; invites the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee to enter into talks and explore with Parliament ways of further improving inter-institutional cooperation and coordinating their work schedules with a view to optimising the use of resources, including interpretation services and canteens;

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 56, 26.2.2001.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 342, 1.12.2000.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 172, 18.6.1999, p. 1.

<sup>(4)</sup> Including € 167 million for the contribution of staff to the Community’s pension scheme.

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5. Calls on the institutions to identify what obstacles there are to equal treatment as defined in Article 13 of the EC Treaty<sup>(1)</sup>, what measures should be taken to overcome them and what the budgetary impact of those measures would be;
6. Supports the Commission's proposal, in the context of the recasting of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (COM(2000) 461), that differentiated appropriations should also be used in administrative expenditure, as this would be an important step towards improved financial management for the Community's buildings policy; furthermore takes the view that direct financing would provide the most cost-effective way for the institutions and the taxpayer, and the most transparent way in terms of administrative procedures, to cover needs in the buildings sector, especially with a view to enlargement; takes the view that multiannual investment plans with differentiated appropriations will be essential for sound management of the Community's buildings policy;
7. Recalls that point 25 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 calls on the two arms of the budgetary authority to adjust the financial perspective to take account of the expenditure requirements resulting from enlargement; calls on the institutions to step up their work so as to allow the competent bodies to take the necessary decisions in good time;
8. Requests all institutions to present, before Parliament's first reading of the 2002 budget, a joint inter-institutional strategy together with a comprehensive and distinct multiannual plan from each institution for preparations for the forthcoming enlargement which indicates, as far as possible, the budgetary consequences of the decisions taken at the European Council of Nice, including the implications of the increased number of Members and the additional staff and buildings required with particular emphasis on the impact on the linguistic services;
9. Underlines the need for European institutions to play a proactive and exemplary role as regards the environmental aspects of their administration, notably as regards their buildings policy, under which environmental aspects should be regarded as a priority when new buildings are purchased, office equipment and mobility, especially in view of ... the revision of the Regulation on a Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), which now provides for the possibility of voluntary participation by organisations; calls on all institutions to participate in EMAS and to earmark the necessary appropriations in their 2002 budgets;
10. Invites the institutions to explore immediate and medium term measures, including better information on public transport, to encourage greater use of public transport and alternative means of transportation and to submit mobility plans, notably with regard to the transport arrangements for staff to and from their places of work as well as between the institution's buildings;
11. Urges the Secretaries-General of all the institutions concerned to take all necessary steps to ensure that the Interinstitutional Recruitment Office is operational at the beginning of the financial year 2002;

**Parliament (Section I)**

12. Is convinced that the 2002 budget must enable Parliament and its administration to start preparing for enlargement by 2004 and ensure that the Members from the new Member States are received in an appropriate environment and are provided with the necessary resources to discharge their duties; is prepared, furthermore, to consider measures in this connection in its establishment plan; stresses that expenditure to be allowed for in the 2002 budget for preparations for enlargement must be contained in the preliminary draft budget in order to ensure a broadly based discussion on, and acceptance of, that expenditure; regards the Bureau's proposal not to make specific enlargement-related proposals for the 2002 budget until September 2001 as an entirely inadequate way of meeting this requirement;
13. Points out that not only Parliament's Administration, but also the political groups face major challenges in connection with enlargement; instructs Parliament's Administration to make appropriate allowance for funding for the political groups, too, in connection with their enlargement strategy;

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.'

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14. Considers it imperative to establish closer contact between Parliament, together with the other institutions, and citizens in the Member States and the applicant countries by means of an enhanced information policy on European integration and enlargement; stresses that the necessary measures should be taken to enable elected representatives and opinion multipliers from the applicant countries to familiarise themselves with Parliament's work; provision must also be made to allow the submission of petitions in one's native language immediately on applicant states joining the Union;

15. Instructs the Bureau to examine ways of improving public access to information on Parliament's website;

16. Recalls that Parliament has decided in paragraph 24 of its resolution of 13 December 2000 on reform of budgetary control procedures and institutions (2000/2008 (INI)) to establish an internal audit service by 1 January 2002 and that the necessary appropriations need to be made available<sup>(1)</sup>;

17. Points out that Parliament's staff, in particular C and D officials, are carrying out increasingly specialised tasks; requests its Secretary-General to establish an appropriate training policy that will allow officials to use the full potential of new information technologies; furthermore considers that officials with specific profiles for specialised tasks should be given the possibility of assuming increased responsibilities;

18. Reiterates its support for the current policy of capital injections with a view to purchasing Parliament's buildings in periods as short as possible, which has already led to considerable savings for the European taxpayer; considers that reducing the interest burden to a minimum is a financially sound measure; recognises that the increasing pressure on the ceiling for heading 5 ('Administrative expenditure') of the financial perspective and enlargement-related expenditure over the next few financial years may prevent those savings from being made; insists that any decisions on future building needs must continue to be driven by the principles of transparency, legality and sound financial management; maintains that all options of renting, leasing and purchasing shall be properly evaluated in order to ensure that any new building acquired continues to provide value for money to the European taxpayer;

19. Stresses that the number and remit of the standing parliamentary committees ought to be reviewed halfway through the term in order to discharge legislative powers and oversight prerogatives as well as possible; stresses that special committees should only be set up where it is essential to do so;

20. Considers that the budgetary impact of the Bureau's decision of 1 February 2001 concerning constituency weeks requires careful examination; invites the Bureau to monitor, in the financial year 2001, the implementation of the rules adopted and to re-examine the criteria, if necessary, before Parliament's first reading of the 2002 budget;

21. Welcomes the Commission proposal for a Council Regulation on the statute and financing of political parties (COM(2000) 898); takes the view that, pending the adoption of this proposal, the financing of the activities of the European political parties should be transparent and in compliance with the rules established by the Bureau;

22. Stresses that the European Parliamentary Association and the Association of Former Members are two different associations; regards it as unacceptable that better logistical support is granted for former Members than for the association of active Members; therefore calls on the Administration to give the European Parliamentary Association better assistance in future as regards the provision of rooms and interpreter resources;

23. Reiterates its support for the establishment of an Assistants' statute;

### **Council (Section II)**

24. Calls on the Council not to include any operational expenditure in its budget, as it would breach paragraph 39 of the IIA and Article 19 of the Financial Regulation and undermine the institutional balance of the Treaty; recalls that the gentlemen's agreement only applies to administrative expenditure;

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Texts Adopted', Item 15.

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25. Notes an increase of 5,6% in the Council's 2001 budget over the 2000 budget; assumes that the Council will do everything within its power to comply with the requirements of budgetary rigour;

#### ***Court of Justice (Section IV)***

26. Notes that the Court of Justice has been given additional staff resources in the 2001 budget to tackle the translation backlog problem and expects that no further staff increases will be necessary for this purpose for the time being; awaits further proposals from the Court on possible measures to reduce pressure on the translation service and calls upon the Court to ensure that the existing backlog is eliminated before enlargement at the latest;

27. Points out that the Court of Justice has published a report on the impact of Enlargement on its services, which asks for a substantial increase in staffing and budgetary resources; calls on the Court of Justice to examine its proposed strategy in close cooperation with the Budgetary Authority and to analyse alternative options such as inter-institutional cooperation, including the translation and interpretation services;

28. Regrets the delays caused to the building projects of the Court and calls on all parties involved, especially the Government of Luxembourg, to reach a solution as soon as possible, as delays not only will make it impossible for the infrastructure to be available in time for enlargement, but will also lead to additional costs for the taxpayer; furthermore urges the Court's administration to be rigorous in view of the total investment cost;

#### ***Court of Auditors (Section V)***

29. Notes that work on the first extension to the Court's current premises will begin during 2001 and welcomes the Court's commitment to remain within the limit of € 25 million (1998 prices) for the total investment cost; agrees that the second extension to the Court's premises, which is planned in order to prepare for the forthcoming enlargement, should follow the first extension without delay, so that additional costs can be avoided; considers that the financing plan proposed by the Court for the first extension (five tranches in the 1999-2003 budgets) and endorsed by the budgetary authority, provides an appropriate model for the financing of the second extension; notes, however, that the recasting of the Financial Regulation could allow the European institutions to improve financing arrangements;

30. Hopes that the Court and Parliament will be in a position to find a mutually acceptable solution to some outstanding issues (e.g. Statement of Assurance and work programme of the Court) before the budgetary authority is asked to consider requests for additional posts in the Court's establishment plan;

31. Supports the Court of Auditors in its efforts to increase contacts with audit authorities in the applicant countries; recognises that a strong and well established audit culture in an enlarged EU is of the utmost importance;

#### ***The Economic and Social Committee (Section VI) and the Committee of the Regions (Section VII)***

32. Notes the decisions taken at the Nice European Council to increase the number of Members of both Committees; encourages the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, therefore, to continue their efforts to modernise and rationalise their working methods and improve the allocation of resources;

33. Is of the opinion that the refurbishment of the Belliard Buildings needs to be carefully monitored in order to make sure that it is carried out in accordance with the plans and cost projections;

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34. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the Ombudsman.

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