

Tuesday 20 May 2008

**2009 budget: Parliament's estimates**

P6\_TA(2008)0208

**European Parliament resolution of 20 May 2008 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2009 (2008/2022(BUD))**

(2009/C 279 E/33)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 272(2) of the EC Treaty,
  - having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities <sup>(1)</sup>, and particularly Article 31,
  - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2008 on the guidelines for the 2009 budget procedure — Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and IX <sup>(3)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Secretary-General's report to the Bureau on drawing up Parliament's preliminary draft estimates for the financial year 2009,
  - having regard to the preliminary draft estimates drawn up by the Bureau on 21 April 2008 pursuant to Rules 22(6) and 73 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to Rule 73 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A6-0181/2008),
- A. whereas a pilot process was agreed in which enhanced cooperation between the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets, and early mutual cooperation on all items with significant budgetary implications, would be applied throughout the 2009 procedure,
- B. whereas the prerogatives of the plenary in adopting the budget will be fully maintained in accordance with the Treaty provisions and the Rules of Procedure,
- C. whereas a pre-conciliation meeting between delegations of the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets took place on 16 April 2008 during which a number of key issues were discussed between the two delegations,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 1525/2007 (OJ L 343, 27.12.2007, p. 9).

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1. Agreement as amended by Decision 2008/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 6, 10.1.2008, p. 7).

<sup>(3)</sup> Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2008)0115.

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1. Recalls that the 2009 budget should respond to a number of main challenges, as identified in its above-mentioned resolution of 10 April 2008 on the budgetary guidelines, while making every effort to ensure the most efficient use of resources and examining all expenditure with a view to identifying savings wherever possible; stresses the high degree of accord on the following areas:

- challenges related to the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty,
- challenges related to 2009 as an election year for the Parliament,
- challenges related to the new Statute for Members and to the change of term;

2. Takes note of the extended dialogue leading up to the estimates stage for 2009 and, particularly, welcomes the pilot process on enhanced internal cooperation, including the pre-conciliation meeting between its Bureau and the Committee on Budgets, in which budgetary issues related to the priorities above were discussed prior to the Bureau's adoption of its preliminary draft estimates;

3. Notes that the overall level of the budget 2009, as suggested by the Bureau, will stay below the traditional voluntary share of 20 % of heading 5 (administrative expenditure) of the multi-annual financial framework;

4. Stresses the fact that human resources, and overall resources for Lisbon-related issues, were predominant questions at the pre-conciliation; welcomes the fact that the Bureau acted on concerns raised by integrating the proposed 65 new posts into the estimates (corresponding to EUR 2 020 023 for 2009) but, at the same time, placing 15 % of those appropriations in reserve pending the submission by the end of June 2008 of complementary information, such as an analytical, detailed and user-friendly establishment plan assessing the allocation and use of human resources in Parliament's secretariat, including a detailed report on redeployment operations in 2008 and those planned for 2009, indicating positive and negative priorities; considers that this should include changes within and between DGs and an outlook in view of reinforcing core legislative activities and services to Members; is of the opinion that information concerning non-officials should be provided in order to allow full comprehension of the needs in terms of staff;

5. Emphasises that the cooperation between its Bureau and Committee on Budgets in jointly seeking such additional clarifications constitutes a new and positive development; underlines the importance of ex-ante and timely consultation of the Committee on Budgets on issues with important financial implications;

6. Agrees with the principle of budgeting all foreseeable needs in the Bureau's preliminary draft estimates, including a 'Lisbon reserve' of EUR 2 million awaiting further evaluation, and a proposal from the Bureau, which should take account of the results of the ongoing working group on human and financial resources tasked with analysing the impact; reiterates its view that the tasks and responsibilities which can genuinely be regarded as new following the new Treaty, as well activities that can be discontinued or re-prioritised, are especially important to identify;

7. Underlines the fact that the new Lisbon Treaty also provides a challenge for political groups; acknowledges that, in line with the reinforcement of the core activities of parliamentary administration, political groups will also need strengthening in terms of staff, while observing budgetary prudence;

8. Notes also that the Bureau has indicated that an additional need, not currently budgeted, might arise for the Visitors' Centre; points out that this has been identified late and understands that the amount would be of a multi-annual nature; recalls its wish, as agreed under the pilot process, to have a timely consultation of the Committee on Budgets on issues with significant financial implications;

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9. Notes the proposal to continue a three-year plan to reclaim expertise in the IT area, reducing the dependence on external consultants in some key areas, and the proposal for an increase of posts in this area; agrees to consider this approach but is of the opinion that, in order to maintain such increases for the final budget, related savings in the current consultant costs should be demonstrated; invites the administration to present before September 2008 a complete assessment of the situation including a coherent IT strategy;
  10. Notes that a long-term strategic plan on buildings policy including maintenance costs and environmental issues will be presented before the end of May 2008; stresses the importance of a thorough debate on this issue in view of arriving at relevant decisions on the way forward and the destination of these appropriations as soon as possible; wishes to be informed about the work of the Bureau with the Commission on an agreement on purchase of buildings and costs; pending such information, takes note of the fact that the buildings reserve included in the draft estimates amounts to EUR 30 000 000, an increase of EUR 10 000 000 compared to 2008; decides to place in reserve EUR 3 400 000 entered by the Bureau in the preliminary draft estimates, pending technical, administrative and financial clarifications on the proposed asbestos removal work in the SDM building in Strasbourg;
  11. Confirms its intention to continue the financing of priorities established in the 2008 budget, notably to improve services to Members in connection with interpretation and with the analytical service of the library;
  12. Stresses the importance of good cooperation between the European institutions, particularly Parliament, the Council and the Commission, in the field of information and communication policy;
  13. Is satisfied that reasonable estimations have been carried out as concerns the expenditure related to the new Members' Statute; insists that any updated figures should be communicated as soon as possible and underlines the possibility of fine-tuning the associated appropriations at a later stage; welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-General to immediately update its Bureau and Committee on Budgets on any new information from the Member States on their intended participation and/or opt-outs as and when it becomes available;
  14. Is also encouraged by the information that contacts have been made with Member States, the Council and the current and forthcoming Council Presidencies, concerning the agreement on a Statute for Assistants; recalls, in this respect, its guidelines and stresses once again the importance it attaches to resolving this issue;
  15. Looks forward to the proposal on a Knowledge Management System that should be presented to the Bureau within the next few weeks; reaffirms its intention to follow this issue closely and its recommendation to the Bureau to take the necessary decisions before the middle of July 2008;
  16. Notwithstanding the positive outcome of the enhanced cooperation so far, and the results of the preconciliation meeting in particular, underlines that a more detailed examination of individual budget items should take place before the first reading of the budget in autumn 2008; will thus examine and take the final budgetary decisions at that time;
  17. Adopts the estimates for the financial year 2009 as drawn up by the Bureau on 21 April 2008; recalls that the adoption of the draft budget will take place at first reading in October 2008, in accordance with the voting procedure laid down by the Treaty;
  18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the estimates to the Council and the Commission.
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