

Guidelines for the 2014 budget - sections other than the Commission

European Parliament resolution of 6 February 2013 on the guidelines for the 2014 budget procedure, Section I – European Parliament, Section II – Council, Section IV – Court of Justice, Section V – Court of Auditors, Section VI – European Economic and Social Committee, Section VII – Committee of the Regions, Section VIII – European Ombudsman, Section IX – European Data Protection Supervisor, Section X – European External Action Service (2013/2003(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - 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 management¹,
 - having regard to Council Decision 2007/436/EC, Euratom of 7 June 2007 on the system of the European Communities' own resources²,
 - having regard to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2011, together with the institutions' replies³,
 - having regard to Title II, Chapter 7 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A7-0020/2013),
- A. whereas the agreement on the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014 to 2020 has still not been reached and, therefore, the ceiling for Heading 5 for the EU's budget in 2014 has not yet been established, while the ceiling for Heading 5 in 2013 is EUR 9 181 million in current prices⁴, and this ceiling, after the annual technical adjustment⁵, would be extended for 2014, should an agreement on the next MFF not be achieved in due time;
- B. whereas, in a context of a heavy burden of public debt and of restraint in times of ongoing national budgetary consolidation efforts, the European Parliament, and all the EU institutions, should continue to exercise a high degree of budgetary responsibility, control and self-restraint;
- C. whereas the smooth functioning of Parliament shall be an equally important guiding principle;

¹ OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1.

² OJ L 163, 23.6.2007, p. 17.

³ OJ C 344, 12.11.2012.

⁴ The Heading 5 ceiling includes the staff contribution to the retirement scheme.

⁵ Article 24 of the Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management, OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p.3

- D. whereas certain investments may have a sustainable impact on the institutional budget and should therefore be considered despite tight margins for manoeuvre;
- E. whereas, at this stage of the annual procedure, Parliament is awaiting the other institutions' estimates and its own Bureau's proposals for the 2014 budget;
- F. whereas the one-off financial implications of the European elections in mid-2014 will have to be borne into mind;

General framework and priorities for the 2014 budget

- 1. Maintains that the institutions should continue to limit or freeze their administrative budgets in solidarity with the difficult economic and budgetary conditions in the Member States, without prejudice to the quality of core institutional activities, respect for legal obligations and the need for development investment;
- 2. Believes that the 2014 appropriations should be based on a careful analysis of appropriation outturn in 2012 and 2013, with a view to making savings on lines where problems have arisen in implementation; considers that real savings and efficiencies can be made by identifying overlaps and inefficiencies across budgetary lines;
- 3. Urges the institutions to strengthen their mutual cooperation in view of sharing best practices where possible and justified and of identifying savings through pooling and sharing of human and technical resources, for example in information technology systems, translation, interpretation and transportation services and, possibly, other areas;

Parliament

- 4. Underlines the fact that institutional restraint has, considering the level of relevant inflation rates, resulted in reducing the EP budget in real terms; recalls that this was made possible through strict budgetary planning and control, the strong commitment of its responsible committee and work reorganisation, notably cuts in travel-related budget lines, reduced length and number of missions, increased use of video-conferencing and optimised translation and interpretation services; recalls that already agreed structural reforms, some of which apply since 2011, are estimated to allow annual savings of approximately EUR 29 million – with a further saving of EUR 10 million in the forecast interest rate on real estate financing over future years made possible by prepayments – despite the need to absorb the increase of competences and the added costs of 18 additional Members resulting from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the preparation for Croatia's accession;
- 5. Recalls that visible signs of self-restraint are the freeze on all of the Members' allowances at the 2011 level until the end of the current parliamentary term and the fact that staff mission allowances have not been indexed since 2007;
- 6. Encourages the continuation of structural and organisational reforms that aim to achieve greater efficiencies without jeopardising legislative excellence and the quality of working conditions; supports organisational innovation to improve Parliament's effectiveness and the Members' quality of services and working conditions, including, but not limited to, more efficient structuring of Parliament's working rhythm, and translation and interpretation services (without endangering the principle of multilingualism), optimal logistical solutions including transport logistics for Members and their assistants, savings in

catering costs, improved in-house research assistance, and continuing and further developing a paperless Parliament and e-meetings; recalls the request for a cost-benefit analysis of the paperless meetings, and calls on the administration to present it to the Committee on Budgets by mid-2013 at the latest;

7. Calls for the implementation of lean and efficient management methods in Parliament in order to reduce administrative burdens and thereby save the institution time and money;
8. Considers that the Joint Bureau and Committee on Budgets Working Group on the Parliament budget could, on the basis the work it began in 2012, play a useful role in this reform, by identifying possible savings and reflecting on and presenting to the Committee on Budgets ideas for improving efficiency; notes that the working group has already largely achieved the objectives established for it at the end of 2011, in particular as regards the reduction of travel expenses; in the light of the Group's preliminary findings based, inter alia, on comparative studies of the European Parliament's budget with the budgets of the US Congress and a sample of Member States' parliaments, encourages the continuation of its work and the development of a corresponding action plan, to be presented to both the Committee on Budgets and the Bureau for consideration in the 2014 Parliament budget process; recalls its resolution of 23 October 2012¹ in which it expressed the expectation that these studies will "create long-term savings in the Parliament's budget and present ideas for improving efficiency in 2013 and the following years"; notes that the European Parliament has lower overall spending per inhabitant than comparable Member State parliaments and the US Congress; notes further that there is a need to strengthen the scrutiny role of Parliament and to provide it with better-targeted research support so that it is able to fulfil its role in democratic representation;
9. Welcomes, more generally, the enhanced cooperation between the Committee on Budgets and the Bureau during the annual budget procedure; stands ready to further strengthen the cooperation between the Secretary-General, the Bureau, and the Committee on Budgets throughout the year with a view to ensuring a smooth budgetary process and effective implementation of the budget; expects the Bureau to present prudent needs-based draft estimates that take account of possible subsequent increases arising from legally binding obligations, in particular the one-off costs related to Members' transition arrangements for the 2014 European elections; calls on the Secretary-General to provide information on the costs of the transition arrangements for the previous European Parliament;
10. Recalls the decision adopted in plenary calling for the Council to present a roadmap by June 2013 on the multiple seats of the EP, and expects both the committees concerned, the Secretary-General and the Bureau to provide Members with up-to-date figures and information on the financial and environmental impact of the multiple seat arrangement; suggests that the EP's own impact assessment services examine this question, including with respect to the impact of the EP's presence or partial presence on the respective communities and regions, and present an assessment by June 2013 in order for their findings to be considered in the context of the next MFF;
11. Calls on Parliament's relevant services to make an assessment of the agreement, between the authorities in Luxembourg and the European Parliament, on the number of staff to be present in Luxembourg, taking into account a revision of Parliament's needs; considers that

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0359, paragraph 93.

this assessment should include suggestions on how to renegotiate the agreement, without prejudice to the applicable legal provisions;

12. Recalls the Parliament's budgetary resolutions, including its most recent resolution of 23 October 2012¹, calling for a transparent decision-making process in the field of buildings policy, based on early information, and a halt in new acquisitions until the end of the current legislature; asks for information about the Secretary-General's findings on, and schedule for, the renovation works and office relocation, including information about an intermediate building for Parliament's staff, in the coming years, especially in relation to the structural problems in the Paul-Henri Spaak (PHS) building and the acquisition of the Trebel building;
13. Recognises the efforts made in 2012 to communicate the state of play of the KAD building to the Committee on Budgets, and requests that this communication continues throughout the duration of the project, in particular with respect to the result of the amended Call to Tender; notes that adaptations and downsizing of 8 000 m² have been made in order to remain under or adhere to the predetermined financial framework for the KAD project, following the request of the Committee on Budgets; welcomes the savings of more than EUR 10 million in interest payments in the coming years – relative to the 2012 financing estimates for the project – achieved by transfers for early advance payments for both the KAD and the Trebel buildings; believes that, in the context of the growing majority among Members in favour of new working arrangements², Parliament's building projects need to be handled cautiously, and that caution should prevail over ambition; encourages the continuation of this fruitful dialogue, and asks that the information requested be delivered in a timely manner;

Other institutions

14. Is aware that the context and outcome of recent budgetary procedures has left most institutions with a limited margin of manoeuvre given the growing tasks entrusted to them, particularly the increased workload of the Court of Justice and the special needs of the European External Action Service (EEAS);
15. Understands that the EEAS is a relatively new institution, which is still in the growth phase, and that its network of missions needs to be further enhanced in order to meet the EU's political priorities; notes that the EEAS is uniquely exposed to inflation in third countries, to exchange-rate fluctuations and to the particular security concerns of its staff;
16. Considers any unjustified, across-the-board cuts, and any undifferentiated approach to the institutions' budgets, as counter-productive; intends, instead, to continue its case-by-case approach;
17. Repeats the position adopted in previous budget cycles that it expects all the institutions to continue to demonstrate efforts in seeking savings and maintaining a high degree of budgetary discipline when drawing up their budget estimates;

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¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0359.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0359.

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Ombudsman, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the European External Action Service.