

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

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*Session document*

FINAL  
**A5-0041/2003**

20 February 2003

## REPORT

on the guidelines for Sections II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII (A) and VIII (B) and on the European Parliament's preliminary draft estimates (Section I) for the 2004 budgetary procedure (2003/2002(BUD))

Committee on Budgets

- Section I - European Parliament
- 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
- Section VIII (A) - European Ombudsman
- Section VIII (B) - European Data Protection Supervisor

Rapporteur: Neena Gill

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## PROCEDURAL PAGE

For the budgetary procedure for the financial year 2004, the Committee on Budgets appointed Neena Gill rapporteur (other sections), at its meeting of 2 December 2002.

At its meetings of 20 January and 11 February 2003 the committee considered the guidelines for the 2004 budget procedure, Section I – European Parliament, 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, Section VIII – European Ombudsman, and decided to draw up a report (2003/2002(BUD)).

It considered the draft report at its meeting of 18 February 2003.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Terence Wynn, chairman; Reimer Böge, and Franz Turchi, vice-chairmen; Neena Gill, rapporteur; María del Pilar Ayuso González (for Ioannis Averoff), Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg, Ozan Ceyhun (for Simon Francis Murphy), Joan Colom i Naval, Den Dover, Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop, James E.M. Elles, Göran Färm, Markus Ferber, Colette Flesch (for Anne Elisabet Jensen), Salvador Garriga Polledo, Anne-Karin Glase (for Giuseppe Pisicchio), Catherine Guy-Quint, Jutta D. Haug, Roger Helmer (for Guido Podestà), María Esther Herranz García, Constanze Angela Krehl, Wilfried Kuckelkorn, John Joseph McCartin, Jan Mulder, Juan Andrés Naranjo Escobar, Joaquim Píscarreta, Giovanni Pittella, Bartho Pronk (for Thierry B. Jean-Pierre), Per Stenmarck, Johan Van Hecke, Kyösti Tapio Virrankoski, Ralf Walter and Brigitte Wenzel-Perillo.

The opinion of the Committee on Petitions is attached.

The report was tabled on 20 February 2003.

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

### **European Parliament resolution on the guidelines for Sections II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII (A) and VIII (B) and on the European Parliament's preliminary draft estimates (Section I) for the 2004 budgetary procedure (2003/2002(BUD))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 272 of the EC Treaty,
  - 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>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2003<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the annual report of the Court of Auditors for the 2001 financial year, together with the institutions' replies<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets and the opinion of the Committee on Petitions (A5-0041/2003),
- A. whereas the provisional figures for the technical adjustment of the financial perspective project, excluding pension contributions of staff, a ceiling of EUR5.426 million for heading 5 ("Administrative expenditure") in the 2004 budget,
- B. whereas the Commission's proposal for the adjustment of the financial perspective projects a figure of EUR 5.983 million at 2004 prices for heading 5,
- C. whereas enlargement of the European Union is scheduled to take place on 1st May 2004,

#### ***Political priorities***

##### **Enlargement**

1. Recalls that the 2004 Budget will be the first one for a European Union possibly composed of 25 Member States; stresses the historical importance of the forthcoming enlargement that will finally put an end to the artificial division of Europe; notes also that the challenges posed by this enlargement, not alone in view of its scale, are of an unprecedented nature; welcomes the progress achieved by the institutions as concerns the implementation of their respective multi-annual strategies to prepare for enlargement; points out, however, that a considerable number of measures remain to be taken in 2003 and 2004; considers it imperative, therefore, that the European institutions are provided with the necessary means to complete their preparations and to ensure that they can be operational for the date of accession; invites the institutions, however, to

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

<sup>2</sup> Not yet published in OJ

<sup>3</sup> Not yet published in OJ

present realistic requests in their 2004 estimates and to apply budgetary rigour;

*Bringing the European Union closer to its citizens*

2. Takes the view that bringing the European institutions closer to the citizens is of the utmost importance; recognises that it is increasingly important to ensure active citizenship and civic participation within the demos; considers that adaptable and transferable media tools should be used to create an EU public media space; stresses that it is crucial that the European citizens are better informed about the activities of the European institutions and how European legislation can influence their daily lives; is willing, therefore, to support measures by institutions to increase awareness in the general public; requests the interinstitutional working group to put forward a set of media action proposals by September 2003 for the creation of a public media space in the Community; expects that the Commission does not divert from the decisions taken by Parliament in the area of the information and communication policy as they reflect its political priorities, calls on the interinstitutional working group on information policy (IGI) to further improve the cooperation methods with the competent committees;

*Ensuring value for money in the European institutions*

3. Points out that enlargement obliges the institutions to critically examine their working patterns and the allocation of resources, with a view to improving their value for money for the taxpayer; requests the institutions to make specific proposals in their 2004 estimates that could lead to an improved quality of spending and to an improved focus on core activities; invites the institutions also, given the pressure on the ceiling of heading 5, to limit their new requests as far as possible to enlargement-related needs;

***General framework***

4. Recalls that the budgetary authority, in particular following Parliament's initiative, managed in the 2003 budget, by means of a frontloading operation, to make appropriations available under the ceiling of heading 5 of the financial perspective to allow the European institutions to prepare for enlargement, despite the fact that the financial perspective did not make provision to allow institutions prepare to welcome new Member States before accession; considers that using available margins in each section of the budget to anticipate expenditure is a useful instrument to reduce the pressure in the following budget and to make the best use of resources;
5. Notes that, in accordance with article 25 of the interinstitutional agreement of 6 May 1999 on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure, Parliament and Council will jointly adjust the financial perspective to cover the needs emanating from enlargement; points out that the figure for the adjustment of heading 5 must provide sufficient leeway to allow institutions to be operational for enlargement and to leave an appropriate margin under the ceiling;
6. Takes the view that the adoption of a budget for 25 EU Member States is necessary to reflect the historical importance of enlargement; considers that the differentiation between a budget for the 15 current Members from January to May and for 25 Members from May

2004 onwards is less obvious in administrative expenditure; notes, however, that specific arrangements may have to be envisaged to take the timing of enlargement into account; invites all institutions to present their 2004 estimates on the basis of 25 Member States and to clearly define all enlargement-related expenditure per item;

7. Invites all institutions to make the presentation of their 2004 estimates more transparent, to improve the analytical part of the budget and to examine, in the spirit of the new Financial Regulation, how performance indicators can be established for the management of their budgets with a view to increasing the quality of spending and the added value of the institution;
8. Takes the view that enlargement will increase the necessity to improve interinstitutional cooperation; recalls that the budgetary authority endorsed in the 2003 budget a 1% cut in recurrent expenditure in the institutions' budgets to foster interinstitutional cooperation and rationalisation measures;
9. Invites all institutions to examine the viability and merit of integrating their translation services and to provide an assessment in their annual report of the Secretaries General on the evolution of heading 5; instructs all the Secretaries General of the institutions to seek an agreement with the interpretation services with a view to paving the way for distance interpretation; considers that all categories of staff, including the language services, should be ready to adapt to evolving needs of the institutions, make the best use of available technologies and should approach the new challenges posed by enlargement in a constructive way;
10. Requests all institutions to inform the budgetary authority on their building needs and possible building projects in the context of the annual report of the Secretaries General on the evolution on heading 5; points out that the annual report should also include an assessment concerning the pensions of staff, particularly the current and future adequacy of funding; requests all Secretaries General also, in the same context, to inform the budgetary authority about the functioning of EPSO, the organisation of open competitions and the way the specific needs of the various institutions are taken into account; also invites the Secretaries General to provide information on the state of affairs and perspectives for facilitating tele-working in the institutions;

### ***The European Parliament - Section I***

11. Is willing to enter appropriations to cover the cost of a Members' statute in its 2004 Budget; notes that the statute may possibly enter into force in July 2004; urges its political authorities and Council to ensure that an agreement can be reached in due time so that precise budgetary decisions can be taken;
12. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has presented a new proposal on the statute for European political parties; recalls that an amount of EUR 7m was entered in the 2003 Budget against item B3-50 ("Contributions to European Political Parties") in the Commission's budget; is of the opinion that the appropriations for the financing of European political parties should be entered in Parliament's section;
13. Takes the view that, following the adjustment of the financial perspective, Parliament should continue to budget up to 20% of heading 5 ("Administrative expenditure"); notes

that, besides enlargement preparations, additional cost factors such as buildings and the Members' statute could oblige it to exceed the self-imposed ceiling;

### *Enlargement*

14. Is willing to examine the progress made with the necessary preparations to ensure that Parliament is fully operational for the date of accession on the basis of an updated multi-annual report from the Steering Committee on Enlargement; expects its Administration and the Bureau, however, to further fine-tune their calculations to prepare for enlargement with a view to providing best value for money;
15. Stresses that Parliament should also, given the challenges posed by enlargement, seize the opportunity to further examine which rationalisation measures could contribute to a more productive use of resources; invites its Bureau, therefore, to take an ambitious stance as regards the activities that could be re-organised or discontinued, as identified by the Steering Committee on Enlargement, taking due account of the Corbett report and the views which the political groups have expressed on this matter; invites its Bureau also to examine which rationalisation measures can be adopted in the management of Members' allowances and expenses and the activities of non-attached Members, before requesting the budgetary authority to make appropriations available for additional posts;
16. Reiterates its commitment to the principles of multilingualism as an integral part of the institution's democratic legitimacy; notes that this enlargement will add up to 10 new languages to the institution's work; considers that the concept of "controlled multilingualism" should be implemented in such a way as both to ensure equality of languages and to make the best possible use of existing human and financial resources through proper planning of requirements in this area; invites its Bureau to further develop this concept in a pragmatic way and invites its political groups to examine what contribution they can make in the context of their activities; also invites its Secretary General to examine ways to improve the scope for making use of interpreters with a view to their continuing to be as responsive as possible to the institution's needs, even when there are 25 languages;
17. Recalls the decision in principle to create 479 enlargement-related posts in the general secretariat and 110 posts in the political groups; expects the outstanding posts to be created during this budgetary procedure;
18. Takes the view that the posts created for enlargement by the budgetary authority should, in principle, not be used for other non-enlargement purposes; invites its Secretary General to examine all redeployment possibilities before re-allocating enlargement posts to new specific needs, such as those emanating from the implementation of the new Financial Regulation; insists, however, that particular attention must be given to Parliament's core activity areas in the allocation of enlargement-related posts;
19. Points out that informatics is an important cost factor in Parliament and that enlargement obliges it to modernise and rationalise this domain; supports its Secretary General's efforts in making Parliament's informatics landscape more integrated with a view to improving value for money; insists, however, that objectives must be clearly defined before issuing a call for tender and that the evolution of cost needs to be closely

monitored;

### *Improving assistance to Members*

20. Notes that the Secretary General has submitted proposals to the Bureau on improving legislative assistance to Members and on a possible new structure for Parliament's Administration; recalls that the aim is to offer the best possible service to Members for their legislative and budgetary responsibilities, which are Parliament's core activities; recalls also that the aim is to reduce the compartmentalisation of the Administration's structure, to improve the work flows, to minimise the impact of staff being based in three different working places, to make the best use of resources and to prepare the structure of Parliament's Administration for the challenge of enlargement; considers that the reform, together with the early retirement scheme, should also be used to establish leaner management structures; recalls its earlier recommendations that, for the performance of Members' duties, a research assistance structure must be provided in connection both with parliamentary work and with the performance of duties as Member in general; expects the budgetary authority to be notified of the budgetary implications in good time in order to incorporate them into the discussions on the budget;
21. Takes the view that Parliament needs to provide interpretation facilities during working lunches in some of Parliament's dining rooms in order to ensure better working conditions for Members; recalls that under article 209 'Property reserve' sufficient appropriations are available for this purpose; invites its Bureau to take the necessary steps;
22. The increased legislative work of Parliament in its function as co-legislator lead to a need for more time and better facilities for Members for discussion and consultation; especially in committee weeks Members and political groups need better interpretation facilities for meetings during the so-called 'lunch-session' such as working group meetings in order to prepare committee meetings; takes the view that to this end either more staff interpreters or free-lance interpreters should be made available;
23. Considers, in view of the developments in CFSP and ESDP, and pending further developments that could emanate from the Convention on the Future of Europe, that it is imperative for Parliament to be in a position to assume its responsibilities for parliamentary oversight and to provide more democratic legitimacy to the Union's external dimension; notes also that Parliament is assuming an increasingly active role in electoral observation world-wide;
24. Takes the view that a comprehensive and practical induction programme should be put in place for welcoming new Members of Parliament following the enlargement of the European Union and the 2004 parliamentary elections;
25. Reiterates its support for the adoption of a statute for Members' assistants; considers that the access of assistants to training courses, including informatics, should be facilitated;
26. Invites its political authorities to make a proposal for the number of parliamentary bodies in the new legislature, in particular on the number of committees and delegations, before Parliament's first reading of the 2004 budget;



### *Bringing Parliament closer to its electorate*

27. Considers that, in view of enlargement on the one hand, and of the forthcoming European elections in 2004 on the other hand, it is imperative to bring Parliament closer to the citizens, so that voter awareness and participation can be improved; takes note of the draft programme of information and communication measures with a view to the June 2004 European elections, as was submitted to its Bureau in September 2002; considers, however, that the report does not contain many innovations and that many of the proposals are already being practised; invites its Secretary General to take a more ambitious approach for the 2004 Budget;
28. Takes the view that in the interests of the needs of Members, and of visitors, multilingualism must be optically represented as part of Parliament's image; expects the necessary funding to be provided during the 2004 budgetary procedure in order to ensure that the still greater degree of diversity resulting from enlargement becomes visible and experiential;
29. Points out that the information offices in the current Member States have a central role to play in delivering Parliament's message to the respective national and regional media and, in such framework, stresses the importance to respect the language diversity of every Member State; welcomes the success achieved in some offices in the development of partnerships and co-productions with television channels but notes that some offices have had more difficulties; requests its Secretary General to ensure that the information offices are provided with the necessary means for the electoral year;
30. Reiterates its support for internet broadcasting of plenary sittings and meetings of particular importance or interest for the general public; recalls, therefore, its invitation to the political authorities to examine the options for its further development and make the corresponding proposals with the presentation of the 2004 preliminary draft estimates;
31. Is of the opinion that the internet should play a more important role in its information and communication policy; notes that the *Europarl* site is becoming an increasingly important tool for both the general public and specialised users (journalists, national administrations, other institutions, users from third countries, international organisations); is convinced that the internet is a most cost-effective way of information and communication, as it can reach a very wide public at limited cost; invites its Secretary General to further improve Parliament's website with a view to making it more user-friendly and welcoming, more attractive and updated, more differentiated offering topical information to both the general public and specialised users; considers it also necessary to further develop the "Citizens' Portal to make it more attractive and interactive;

### *Staff policy*

32. Recalls that Parliament's promotion and staff evaluation policy has served as an example for other institutions and the Commission's reform proposals; points out, however, that some rigidities remain in the current system that have not been eliminated yet; invites

its Secretary General, pending the adoption of the new Staff Regulations, to submit before its first reading of the budget in autumn a proposal for the revision of Parliament's promotion policy with a view to creating more incentives for performance and a more merit-based approach; insists, however, that fairness and the respect of rules must remain cornerstones of the system if a de facto budgetary guarantee is to be provided;

33. Takes the view that mobility of staff is an appropriate way to motivate staff and to make the Administration more dynamic and responsive; notes, however, that its rigidity over the previous years has led to a loss of expertise in some services; invites its Secretary General, on the one hand, to submit a proposal to make the system more flexible with a view to taking the specific requirements of some services better into account; considers, on the other hand, that voluntary mobility of staff should also be facilitated;
34. Expresses its support for the equal opportunities policy adopted by its Bureau on the basis of the Lalumière report; insists, however, that its staff policy must address all types of discrimination in accordance with Article 13 of the Treaty and that appropriate monitoring arrangements be set up;
35. Considers it imperative that appropriate induction programmes be in place for the officials that will be recruited from the new Member States and for assistants to Members in the new legislature;
36. Requests its Secretary General to ensure that the choice of candidates that will benefit from the special early retirement scheme will reflect the functional needs of the institution and be geared towards increasing productivity;
37. Points out that new posts in Parliament should only be authorised for new specific needs, for which a precise job description has been submitted and which cannot be filled by redeployment; requests its Secretary-General to submit a report by 1st June 2003 indicating the number of A3 adviser posts in Parliament's Administration and the functional justifications for them;

#### *Buildings*

38. Recalls that a reserve of EUR 35 m was entered into the 2003 Budget earmarked for the purchase of the Konrad Adenauer Building in Luxembourg; regrets, however, the negotiations with the authorities of Luxembourg have not been as successful as expected; invites the authorities of Luxembourg not to forget their commitment given to Parliament to take previous lease payments into account; invites its Bureau to examine what other options could be available on the real estate market, should the negotiations with Luxembourg lead to no satisfactory results; points out that the budgetary authority will not be willing to cover the financing for unreasonable prices that are now being proposed;
39. Notes that the legal situation concerning the Louise Weiss building in Strasbourg and its final price may be clarified in the course of 2003; recalls that anticipative payments were made on the building in 2000 and 2002, in line with Parliament's wish to reduce the financing time frame as much as possible; takes the view that further anticipative payments make sense from a budgetary point of view, irrespective of the option to purchase, in order to create leeway in future budgets;

40. Invites its Bureau to consult the relevant committee before taking any further decisions on the envisaged new projects in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg; requests its Secretary General to submit a report by 1st June 2004 outlining the functional justifications for the new significant buildings projects and possible alternatives to them with the corresponding financial implications;

#### *Court of Justice - Section IV*

41. Notes that, in accordance with the Treaty of Nice, up to ten additional judges for the Court of Justice and 10 new judges for the Court of First Instance will have to be accommodated in the institution as from 1 May 2004, together with the staff of their respective private offices and other enlargement-related staff; notes also that the Court's building project to cater for enlargement will not be completed before 2005; is willing, therefore, to examine the budgetary implications of finding additional office space in 2004; invites the Court, however, to make use of interinstitutional cooperation with a view to obtaining the best possible conditions on the market in Luxembourg;
42. Recalls that the cost of the Court's building project to cater for enlargement, namely the renovation and extension of the palace building and the construction of two new towers, was estimated to amount to EUR 296 m; urges the Court, despite the fact that the financing of this project will not impact the 2004 budget, to ensure that the square metre price is reduced with a view to providing best value for money, or to examine alternative proposals;
43. Requests the Court to fine-tune their enlargement-related staffing estimations with a view to presenting a realistic request in their 2004 estimates; reiterates its position that the backlog in translations is not considered to be a permanent problem and recalls that appropriations for the creation of 51 linguistic posts were made available by the budgetary authority to solve the problem; expects the Court to inform the budgetary authority on the progress achieved in this context with the presentation of their 2004 estimates;

#### *Court of Auditors - Section V*

44. Recalls that, following the conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council, significant amounts of EU funding will be allocated in the new Member States; notes that it will be imperative to ensure that auditing in the new Member States is brought closer to auditing practices in current Member States; welcomes the efforts of the Court over the previous years with a view to increasing cooperation with audit authorities in the new Member States; invites the Court to continue its efforts also with a view to facilitating the establishment of a single audit system in the European Union, as this will improve the use of resources, avoid duplication and contribute to a more effective audit of European funding;
45. Points out that an effective audit authority at European level is imperative to examine how EU funding can provide best value for money; expresses its concern, therefore, at the number of vacant posts in the Court and, in particular as the auditing services are concerned;
46. Notes that the number of Members of the Court of Auditors will increase from 15 to 25 as

a result of enlargement;

***Economic and Social Committee - Section VI and Committee of the Regions - Section VII***

47. Recalls that, following the request of the budgetary authority, the financing for the move of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions to the Belliard Building and the vacation of the Ravenstein building were postponed from the end of 2003 to the beginning of 2004; notes, in view of latest developments, that the move is not likely to take place before April 2004; is willing to consider the necessary budgetary decisions to cover the cost in the 2004 Budget; urges both Committees to ensure that their specific needs as regards the renovation of the Belliard building do not exceed the amount of EUR 26m that was made available by the budgetary authority;

***The European Ombudsman***

48. Welcomes the efforts of the Ombudsman's services to facilitate the access of the Citizen to information via the internet; notes that the number of electronic submissions to the Ombudsman has increased considerably and that this trend will continue with enlargement; is willing, therefore, to support further improvements in the service to the citizen in the 2004 Budget;

\* \* \*

49. 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, the European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor.

27 January 2003

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS**

for the Committee on Budgets

on Budget 2004: other sections - guidelines  
(2003/2002(BUD))

Draftsman: Roy Perry

### **PROCEDURE**

The Committee on Petitions appointed Roy Perry draftsman at its meeting of 23 January 2003.

The committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 22/23 January 2003.

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Vitalino Gemelli, chairman; Roy Perry, vice-chairman and draftsman; Astrid Thors, vice-chairman; Richard A. Balfe, Herbert Bösch, Janelly Fourtou, Laura González Álvarez, Stephen Hughes (for Proinsias De Rossa pursuant to Rule 153 (2), Margot Kessler, Jean Lambert, Guido Sacconi and Maria Sornosa Martinez.

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Bearing in mind the relatively limited possibilities available to the Committee on Petitions regarding the Budget of the European Union only two draft paragraphs are proposed. They reflect the main focus of the Committee's activity in relation to the European citizen. 2004 is election year and enlargement year, both of which have implications for the budget.

One concerns the need to provide greater access and participation in the work of the Committee itself to the petitioner by increasing the provisions of **section A line 250** to accommodate the requests of a greater number of petitioners to attend meetings. This is necessary in the context of the evolution of the Committee's own attempts to profile the European Parliament responsiveness to individual grievances, especially when such grievances have a broader implication for EU policy making or adjustment. The Committee, while continuing the essential task of treating every petition with the integrity it deserves, is gradually identifying specific petitions for more in depth assessment, with a view to their effective resolution. This attracts broader public attention for the work of the Committee, and thus the Parliament. More financial resources should be earmarked for this allowing more petitioners to attend meetings, on a separate basis from identified specialists or experts who may be invited to speak at public hearings organised by most of Parliament's committees. In Parliament's newly modified rules of procedure this distinction has already been made in paragraph 175,3.

The second proposal concerns the office of the European Ombudsman for which this Committee has budgetary responsibility. The Ombudsman will have specific demands made on his office in the context of enlargement and a number of measures were approved this year to increase very modestly the establishment plan in preparation for enlargement. These will need to be extended in 2004. Although it is necessary to wait for the newly elected Ombudsman's specific requests which will be made later in the normal course of the preparation of the 2004 budget, it is important at this stage to establish a marker approving the principle in the framework resolution.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Petitions calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

Proposal a.

Encourages efforts within the European Parliament which are designed to enhance the meaningfulness of Parliament to the European citizen, especially through the work of the Committee on Petitions, and accords a modest increase in the financial resources which should be specifically earmarked to facilitate the participation of petitioners at meetings of the Committee as agreed in the newly modified Rules of Procedure in Paragraph 175,3.

Proposal b.

Recognises the increasing demands which are being placed on the Office of the European

Ombudsman, in the context of enlargement, but also in the increasing recourse of the citizen to the service provided by the Ombudsman to combat maladministration within the EU institutions and bodies.