

P7_TA(2012)0109

Estimates of revenue and expenditure for 2013 - Section I - Parliament

European Parliament resolution of 29 March 2012 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2013 (2012/2006(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - 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 Communities¹, and in particular Article 31 thereof,
 - 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 management²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2012 on the guidelines for the 2013 budget procedure – Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X³,
 - having regard to the Secretary-General's report to the Bureau on drawing up Parliament's preliminary draft estimates for the financial year 2013,
 - having regard to the preliminary draft estimates drawn up by the Bureau on 12 March 2012 pursuant to Rules 23(7) and 79(1) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the draft estimates drawn up by the Committee on Budgets pursuant to Rule 79(2) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to Rule 79 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A7-0062/2012),
- A. whereas the ceiling for Heading 5 of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the Union budget in 2013 is EUR 9 181 million in current prices⁴;
- B. whereas Croatia's accession will have an impact on Parliament's 2013 budget, namely as regards resources for new Members and staff recruitment;
- C. whereas, in a context of a heavy burden of public debt and of restraint in times of ongoing national budgetary consolidation efforts, Parliament should show budgetary responsibility and self-restraint, noting the letter dated 23 January 2012 from Commissioner Lewandowski to the Presidents of the Union institutions;

¹ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

² OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0050.

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

- D. whereas it is particularly important that the Committee on Budgets and the Bureau continue enhanced cooperation throughout the annual budget procedure under Rules 23 and 79 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure;
- E. whereas the prerogatives of the plenary in adopting the estimates and the final budget will be fully maintained in accordance with the Treaty and the Rules of Procedure;
- F. whereas pre-conciliation and conciliation meetings between delegations of the Bureau and of the Committee on Budgets took place on 6 March and 13 March 2012;

General Framework and overall budget

1. Welcomes good cooperation between the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets during the current budget procedure and the agreement reached in the conciliation meeting of 13 March 2012;
2. Believes that Parliament's places of work should be limited to a single seat for Members and officials; calls on the Council to take into account the demands expressed already on several occasions by Parliament and Union citizens concerning the need to fix a single seat for the Members and officials, further reiterated in paragraph 7 of its resolution of 16 February 2012 on the guidelines for the 2013 budget procedure, sections other than the Commission;
3. Notes that the level of the preliminary draft estimates for the 2013 budget, as suggested by the Secretary-General in its report to the Bureau, amounts to EUR 1 768 731 441; notes the suggested rate of increase of 2,96 % over the 2012 budget;
4. Welcomes efforts made to present realistic estimates and acknowledges the fact that the Bureau is ready to adopt further savings as compared to the original level suggested in the Secretary-General's report; stresses that the goal of any budget negotiation should be to achieve maximum efficiency; pursuant to the agreement reached by the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets at the conciliation meeting of 13 March 2012, sets the overall level of the estimates for 2013 at EUR 1 759 391 671 corresponding to a rate of increase of 1,9 % over the 2012 budget excluding the costs of enlargement to Croatia; further insists on the need for strict budgetary control, close cooperation with the Committee on Budgets and identifying further possible savings during this budgetary procedure;

Specific issues

5. Welcomes suggested savings in connection with staff travel and redeployments in the establishment plan;
6. Welcomes the suggested savings of about EUR 3,5 million in connection with parliamentary assistance in the report of the Secretary-General to the Members of the Bureau on the Preliminary Draft Estimates of the European Parliament for the financial year 2013; notes that those savings take into account the outturn of expenditure of this budget line in 2011;
7. Notes plans for an information campaign for the 2014 elections; requests further information in due time;
8. Welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative taken in 2011 proposing the reorganisation of

translation and interpretation activities; believes that such an initiative will lead to significant savings in the 2012 budget and calls for this initiative to be continued in 2013; defends, however, the principle of multilingualism, and highlights the unique nature of Parliament with regard to interpretation and translation needs; furthermore highlights the importance of inter-institutional cooperation in this field;

9. Urges the administration to present an independent evaluation of Parliament's budget with the aim of identifying savings throughout all budget lines and present this evaluation to the Committee on Budgets by September 2012 at the latest; to this end, reminds the Secretary-General and the Bureau of its request for an update of the 2002 Secretary-General's report to the Bureau regarding the cost of maintaining three places of work; further reminds the Secretary-General and the Bureau of its request for the establishment of a working group as soon as possible; considers that such group should discuss inter alia the findings of the requested report concerning Members' travels, due to be completed by 31 March 2012, the results of a comparative study with the budgets of a representative sample of Member-State parliaments and with the budget of the United States Congress and the financing of the building policy; recalls that conclusions reached by the group should be implemented without delay;
10. Requests a report on savings achieved during the implementation of the 2012 budget, in line with the calls for savings expressed in its position of 26 October 2011 on the 2012 draft budget as modified by Council - all sections¹; expects such a report to be communicated to the Committee on Budgets by no later than 31 August 2013;
11. Highlights its willingness to contribute actively to maintaining budgetary discipline by freezing all budget lines relating to travel and not indexing any of the Members' individual allowances until the end of the legislature;
12. Takes note of the increased activities of Members in non-legislative work as laid down in the Rules of Procedures which ties a considerable amount of Parliament's resources and those of other Union institutions; asks the Bureau and the Secretary-General for an analysis of this fact before the adoption of Parliament's budget 2013 and to present options on how to limit this increased burden;
13. Is of the opinion that further reorganisation of Parliament's working methods should be considered; repeats that substantial savings could be made by having a single seat for Parliament; stresses that Parliament should have the right to decide its own working arrangements; calls on the Secretary-General to implement a possible revision of the calendar for committee meetings and delegation missions; furthermore, calls on the Secretary-General to examine possible further opportunities for savings regarding delegations; if such changes can be implemented in 2012, requests that the administration provide the Committee on Budgets with a record of savings generated in 2012 in these areas;
14. Notes the high level of appropriations proposed for the continuation of the multiannual ICT strategy; understands that it could take several years for projects currently being undertaken to be completed; welcomes the launch of the e-committee programme; understands that a pilot scheme for the e-meetings programme is currently underway; requests further information about the possible costs of this programme and when it will be fully

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0461.

implemented; calls for a cost-benefit analysis of the paperless meetings project to be presented to the Committee on Budgets; encourages its administration to pursue policies which will enable Members to use effective tools based on new technologies and support the legislative process more effectively, in particular through bringing the Knowledge Management System to fruition; by the same token calls for the increased use of video conferencing which could help to further reduce the travel costs of both Members and staff;

15. Notes that the creation of a Directorate for democracy support seeks to enhance the synergy between the different in-house services dealing with issues relating to democracy; expects that the decision taken will make the organisation of the services more transparent, coherent and efficient; insists that this reorganisation of services must be budget neutral;
16. Notes the conditions set out in the regulation concerning the financing of political parties¹; is concerned that "the principles on which the European Union is founded, namely the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law" are not being fully respected; insists that the granting of Parliament funding should only go to those parties that rigorously uphold the founding principles of the Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights; asks therefore for the rules to be revised accordingly;
17. Taking into account the 2011 and 2010 outturn levels and the necessary budgetary restrictions in the time of crisis, believes that all the appropriations relating to representation expenses for the budgetary year 2013 should be frozen and kept under strict control;
18. Notes that, pursuant to the agreement reached in the conciliation meeting of 13 March 2012 between the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets, the EUR 3 million reserve for priority projects under development (Chapter 106) has been withdrawn from the estimates;
19. Notes that the level of appropriations proposed in the preliminary draft estimates for the EMAS reserve has substantially increased compared to the 2012 level; requests detailed explanation of this increase by no later than August 2012;

Buildings

20. Is aware that the KAD project is a significant undertaking for Parliament which aims to rationalise Parliament's administration in Luxembourg to obtain synergies; is concerned that further project delays could lead to significant extra costs; calls therefore for updated information specifying the timetable of the project until its completion (planned for 2017 at the latest) the evolution of the estimated cost of the KAD I and KAD II project since 2008 compared to original estimates, the progress of work on the project and any unexpected new developments to be communicated to the Committee on Budgets as soon as possible; believes that the creation of any new posts specific to the project should strike the right balance between posts limited to the project duration and those foreseen on a permanent basis; furthermore highlights the need to take into account changes and insists on being consulted before any decision is taken on increased financing of the project and on creating new posts;

¹ Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4th November 2003 on the regulations governing political parties at European level and the rules regarding their funding (OJ L 297, 15.11.2003, p. 1).

21. Welcomes the revision of the estimated running costs of the House of European History; takes note that the 2013 budget will see a substantial increase in its funding given the fact that its opening is foreseen for 2014; is concerned about the estimated development costs and requests, therefore, strict adherence to the minimum costs and not to exceed the figures set out in the estimates; believes that Parliament should look for sources of possible financing other than its own budget; furthermore, in reference to the letter from the President of the European Commission of 28 September 2011, expects that a concrete agreement on co-financing the running costs will be signed by no later than August 2013;
22. Notes that the estimates include a 22 % increase compared to 2012 for the implementation of an "enhanced maintenance policy"; requests more detail from the Secretary-General with regard to this policy and how the proposed appropriations will be used; understands the need for certain buildings to be renovated; calls, however, for more detailed information on the timing and costs of the renovation policy;

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23. Adopts the estimates for the financial year 2013;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the estimates to the Council and the Commission.