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REPORT

on the guidelines for the 2001 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	-	Ombudsman

Committee on Budgets

Rapporteur: Markus Ferber

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At its meeting of 27 January 2000 the Committee on Budgets appointed Markus Ferber rapporteur.

At its meetings of 14 and 20 March 2000 it discussed the guidelines for the 2001 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 - Ombudsman).

At the latter meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously, with one abstention.

The following were present for the vote: Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop, acting Chairman, Markus Ferber, Rapporteur, Ioannis Averoff, Herbert Bösch (for David W. Martin), Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg, Joan Colom i Naval, Carlos Costa Neves, Gérard M.J. Deprez (for James E.M. Elles), Den Dover, Göran Färm, Salvador Garriga Polledo, Neena Gill, Catherine Guy-Quint, Jutta D. Haug, Anne Elisabet Jensen, Constanze Angela Krehl, Florence Kuntz, Armin Laschet, José Paulo Martins Casaca, John Joseph McCartin, Jan Mulder, Juan Andres Naranjo Escobar, Giovanni Saverio Pittella, Samuli Pohjamo (for Luciana Sbarbati), Bernhard Rapkay (for Wilfried Kuckelkorn), Heide Rühle, Esko Olavi Seppänen (for Chantal Cauquil), Per Stenmarck, Michiel van Hulten (for Terence Wynn), Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca, Kyösti Tapio Virrankoski, Ralf Walter, Brigitte Wenzel-Perillo.

The report was tabled on 21 March 2000.

The deadline for tabling amendments is 27 March 2000 at 12.00 h.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Resolution of the European Parliament on the guidelines for the 2001 budget procedure:
Section I – European Parliament; Section II – Council; Section IV – Court of Justices; Section V – Court of Auditors; Section VI Economic and Social Committee; Section VII – Committee of the Regions, and Section VIII – Ombudsman.

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2000⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Court of Auditors' Annual report concerning the financial year 1998, together with the institutions' replies ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets and the opinion of the Committee on Petitions (A5-0068/2000),
- A. whereas the ceiling of cat. 5 in the 2001 budget is € 4 776 000 000³.

All institutions

1. Points out that the policy of budgetary rigour will also apply in the budget 2001, that the priority setting amongst the needs of the various institutions continues to be extremely important, to avoid the ceiling of category 5 expenditure being reached; emphasises that every request for additional expenditure has to be duly justified, and may, in principle, be granted for new tasks only, and , in respect of requests for new staff, only where redeployment is not possible;
2. Asks the secretaries-general of the institutions to consider the administrative, budgetary and financial implications of the forthcoming enlargement, with particular reference to staffing requirements, office space and the need to refurbish buildings currently in use; asks in particular that a report be provided by 31 May 2000 showing what steps could be taken in this context to ensure cost-effective and qualitative good translations, e.g. by freelance and other outside sources; takes the view that current recruitment methods are not an appropriate and efficient means of recruiting capable staff from the applicant countries; asks the secretaries-general therefore to explore other recruitment policies, such as the setting-up of an interinstitutional agency for the recruitment of staff, on the assumption that the Staff Regulations will be revised in time to allow for this new form of recruitment; requests that such an agency be incorporated with other inter-institutional efforts for rationalising staff recruitment;
3. Welcomes the White Paper on Commission reform and considers, that general

¹ OJ L 40, of 14 February 2000

² OJ C 349 du 03/12/1999 – p. 0001-0245

³ To which an amount of about € 163 Mio has to be added, being the amount of the staff contributions to the pension scheme of the officials of the Community. See footnote 2 to Annex I of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 (O.J. C 172/1 of 18 June 1999), and COM(2000) 93 final, for the technical adjustments.

principles of reform have to apply to all institutions in order to increase transparency, responsibility and accountability to the European citizens;

4. Points out that, until the expiry of the current financial perspective, the margin under heading 5 will remain limited, and asks the secretaries-general of the institutions to submit a medium term work plan, from which a staffing needs plan can follow; ;
5. Recalls that the process of reforming the Commission will include several aspects of staff policy and regulations, on which appropriate consultations between the institutions and with staff organisation must be conducted; nevertheless, presents in the context of the 2001 budgetary procedure remarks which aim to improve the European Parliament's administration;
6. Asks the secretaries-general of the institutions to present their budgets for the year 2001 both in the traditional manner (analytical presentation) and using the activity-based budgeting method.
7. Considers that, in parallel with the administrative reform currently under way in the Commission, the other institutions should improve the management of their own human and financial resources; asks the secretaries-general of other institutions therefore to submit by 1 September a broader report on how the institutions are going to reform their administrations and considers that several specific remarks in this resolution must be seen in the conjunction of such a report on the European Parliament;
8. Calls upon the Commission to propose in its proposal for the reform of the Staff Regulation that a capital-based pension system for the officials of the Community be set up;
9. Wishes to be informed by the institutions of the measures they have taken to implement the Commission's activity plan on "green Housekeeping" (sustainable administrative practices);
10. Stresses that the establishment plans to be submitted to the budgetary authority for the year 2001 should take into account the potential savings in human and financial resources deriving from the use of new software programmes, office equipment, electronic mail, etc.; takes the view therefore that no new posts in the lower grades should be created; stresses the importance of C grades doing specialised work on data-processing applications; asks the institutions to determine the extent to which lower grade posts can be upgraded to take account of more complex duties performed by their holders; asks its Secretary-General to submit before 1 September 2000 a budgetary-neutral plan for the conversion of C and D posts into B posts;
11. Wishes that the Appointing Authorities of the Institutions will be informed about the level of the absence of staff on sick leave, leave on personal grounds and leave for secondment to another public body; asks the institutions to submit the relevant figures for the year 1999 when they forward their estimates for 2001, together with an overview of the reasons why leave on personal grounds was granted;
12. Asks the institutions, with reference to the 1998 report of the Court of Auditors, to consider applications for allowances made pursuant to Article 2(4) of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations (allowance for any person whom the official has a legal

responsibility to maintain) on a case-by-case basis, so as to prevent such allowances from being granted automatically, and to study in greater detail the legal and economic circumstances prevailing in the countries of residence of beneficiaries of the dependent child allowance;

13. Asks the Institutions, in the framework of the review of the Staff Regulations, to consider the extent to which the current system of salary weightings is still justified;
14. Notes the ongoing work in the context of the 1998 discharge for the other institutions; considers that the conclusions from this exercise may need to be reflected in the decisions taken in the 2001 budget;

Parliament

15. Notes that, owing in particular to the increase in Parliament's powers resulting from the Amsterdam Treaty, the workload of Members has seriously increased over recent years; stresses that it is of vital importance for the Members properly to serve the citizens they represent, and that, in order to fulfil their mandate they require adequate resources; insists however, that the system of members' allowances should be fully accountable; takes the view that future funding for personal assistance should take account of the possible entry into force of a statute for members' assistants;
16. Points out that Parliament undertook (resolution of 11 March 1999) to apply the assistants' statute right from the start of this parliamentary term, a priority confirmed on a number of occasions in the new Parliament; considers it necessary therefore for provision to be made in the 2001 budget for the appropriate instruments to implement it; calls on its Secretary-General to enter an ad hoc budget heading and to reorganise the establishment plan of the personnel directorate-general and augment the departments responsible for managing auxiliary staff contracts;
17. Recommends that the outcome of the study on the work of a Member of the European Parliament which has been awarded by the Conference of Presidents, also be used to assess whether the current level of assistance is adequate for Members to fulfil their mandate;
18. Asks its Secretary-General to explore ways ensuring that all staff dealing directly with the activities of the Members are based in the places where those activities are conducted;
19. Takes the view that the quality of the translations produced by Parliament's translation service in various policy areas betrays a lack of specialisation; asks the Bureau to submit proposals seeking to ensure that translation standards keep pace with the increasingly specialised work carried out by the institution;
20. Instructs the Secretary-General to submit before 1 July 2000 a report on the allocation of human resources in Parliament's Secretariat in order to evaluate the efficient use of staff dealing directly or indirectly with the Members' activities; points out that € 300,000 was made available under Article 260 ("Limited consultations, studies and surveys, STOA programme") of Parliament's 2000 budget for the commissioning of an external study *"to produce proposals for improving the working methods and staff structure of Parliament's administration in the light of the challenges which Parliament*

will face in the future”; asks its Secretary-General to ensure that the findings of this study will be available by 1 September 2000.

21. Asks its competent bodies to streamline the work of the Committee on Petitions with a view to ensuring that petitions are processed in a more cost-effective manner, inter alia by implementing a database, combining human resources and reorganising working methods, for example separating petitions which need a political follow up (A-Petition) from petitions which can be handled satisfactorily at a more administrative level, by way of the written procedure implying the members of the Petitions Committee without specific deliberation in Committee (inadmissible petitions and B-Petitions); asks its services and its Committee on Constitutional Affairs to establish an action plan in order to implement new working methods and procedures as well as to prepare the required modifications to the relevant rules of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure after having consulted the Petitions Committee;
22. Asks its Secretary-General to submit an assessment of the 2000 mobility exercise before 1 April 2001;
23. Asks its Secretary-General to ensure that future privatisation and/or outsourcing of services is cost-effective, and maintains a high level of quality of service;
24. Asks its Secretary-General to submit a report on the state of the various data-processing projects undertaken by the institution before 1 July 2000, and on the activities of the Directorate for Data-Processing and Telecommunications over 1999 and 2000;
25. Expects the Secretary-General to submit by 1 July 2000 a report on the progress made in interinstitutional cooperation in the property sector - to include a quantitative assessment of future office space requirements - and on the state of play in the negotiations with the Luxembourg authorities;
26. Asks the Secretary-General to examine the implications of the large number of experts employed in Parliament’s administration and in the political groups on the basis of outside contracts, and investigate alternatives in the data processing sector;
27. Expects the Secretary-General to submit by 1 July 2000 a report stating his views on the declining number of public tenders and the rapid increase in the direct award of contracts that could be put out to public tender, the number of which is increasing in absolute terms;
28. Recalls the considerable efforts made in the last Parliament to foster inter-institutional cooperation between the Commission and Parliament concerning information policy; notes that an initial start has been made in putting certain common activities in the Van Maerlant building; requests a report by 15 June 2000 on what future steps should be taken by the Secretary-General to deepen the cooperation between the EU institutions on information policy;
29. Asks the Secretary-General to investigate the cost implications of setting up an information centre on the premises currently occupied by Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg, where individual visitors can, both during the week and at weekends, obtain information about the activities of Parliament and the Community in general;

Parliament, Committee of the Regions and Economic and Social Committee

30. Calls for the Secretaries-general of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions to submit a report by 30 June 2000 setting out those areas such as interpretation where a common use of services might be useful between the institutions;

Commission

31. Asks the Commission to make a critical review of the allowances and the arrangements for the reimbursement of expenses set out in Annex VII to the Staff Regulations, since some of them no longer appear to be justified;
32. Asks the Commission to submit before 1 September 2000 a legislative proposal on the statute of, and for financial support to be provided to, European political parties, given that “*they contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union,*” (Article 191 of the EC Treaty);

Court of Justice

33. Asks the Court to submit in good time before Parliament’s first reading of the 2001 budget an analysis on its future human and financial resources requirements with a view to the upcoming enlargement and the expected increase in the Court's workload; notes that proper account will have to be taken of the outcome of the negotiations on the Communities’ judicial system conducted at the Intergovernmental Conference and in the framework of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, currently in progress;
34. Wishes to receive regular progress reports on the refurbishment of the “Palais” building;

Court of Auditors

35. Asks the Court to bring its standard abatement into line with the number of vacant posts;
36. Wishes to receive regular progress reports on the construction of the extension to the Court's building;

Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions

37. Urges the two Committees to do their utmost to conclude the negotiations with the owner of the Belliard buildings as quickly as possible, expects the refurbishment work to begin as soon as possible; reiterates that the overall budget for the refurbishment work must not exceed the agreed amount of € 27 million (1999 prices);
38. Calls on the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, to enter travel and daily allowances for its Members under Chapter 10 (“*Members of the Institution*”), as the other institutions do, rather than under budget line 250 (“*Meetings in general*”); points out that experts' fees should be paid from Article 260 (“*Limited consultations, studies and surveys*”);
39. Urges the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions to

improve their databases containing information about family circumstances of their staff, in order to ensure that they reflect the real state of affairs, as is proposed in the Court of Auditors report for 1998;

Committee of the Regions

40. Asks the Committee of the Regions to bring its costs for auxiliary agents into line with those of the other institutions by applying the principle of permanent posts for permanent tasks, and to make the necessary changes to the establishment plan in its estimates for 2001 accordingly, taking due account of the recruitment procedures set out in the Staff Regulations and of the need to maintain budgetary neutrality;

Ombudsman

41. Is in favour of the continuation of the agreement between the Ombudsman and the Parliament on administrative, financial and logistical matters; stresses that, although Ombudsman's budget became an independent section of the general budget of the Communities as of the 2000 budget, this should not lead to staff increases in the administrative, budgetary and financial sectors;

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* *

42. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Presidents of 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.

20 March 2000

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

for the Committee on Budgets

on the guidelines for the 2001 budget procedure

Draftsman: Roy Perry

PROCEDURE

The Committee on Petitions appointed Roy Perry draftsman at its meeting of 23/24 February 2000.

It considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 20 March 2000.

At this last meeting it adopted the amendment below unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Proinsias De Rossa, second vice chairman and acting chairman, Jonathan Evans, acting rapporteur (for Roy James Perry), Mary Elizabeth Banotti, Carlos Candal, Janelly Fourtou, Vasco Graça Moura, Margot Keßler, Véronique Mathieu, Astrid Thors, Antonios Trakatellis.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Petitions calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Text proposed by the Committee on Budgets

Amendments by the Committee on Petitions

(Amendment 1)

Paragraph 17

17. Asks its competent bodies to streamline the work of the Committee on Petitions with a view to ensuring that petitions are processed in a more cost-effective manner, inter alia by reducing translation, printing and meeting costs by, for example separating petitions which need a political follow up from petitions which can be handled satisfactorily at the administrative level; asks its Committee on Constitutional Affairs to prepare the required modifications to the relevant rules of Parliament's Rules of Procedure;

17. Asks its competent bodies to streamline the work of the Committee on Petitions with a view to ensuring that petitions are processed in a more cost-effective manner, inter alia by implementing a database, combining human resources and reorganising working methods (7 words deleted), for example by separating petitions which need a political follow up (A-Petition) from petitions which can be handled satisfactorily at a more (1 word deleted) administrative level, by way of the written procedure implying the members of the Petitions Committee without specific deliberation in Committee (inadmissible petitions and B-Petitions;) asks its services and its Committee on Constitutional Affairs to establish an action plan in order to implement new working methods and procedures as well as to prepare the required modifications to the relevant rules of Parliament's Rules of Procedure after having consulted the Petitions Committee;

Justification:

During the last legislature the Committee on Petitions has already streamlined its work in distinguishing: A-Petitions, to be dealt with in Committee and: inadmissible and B-Petitions, which are dealt with in a written procedure on the basis of a recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee on Petitions. This recommendation is prepared at the administrative level by the Secretariat of the Committee on Petitions and normally approved by the members of the Committee.

With regard to the constantly increasing number of petitions, the secretariat should dispose of an adequate data base equipment and the corresponding qualified staff.