

Guidelines for the 2010 budget procedure – Sections I, II and IV to IX

European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2009 on the guidelines for the 2010 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 (2009/2004(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 272 of the EC Treaty,
 - 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 2000/597/EC, Euratom of 29 September 2000 on the system of the European Communities' own resources²,
 - 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 Communities³,
 - having regard to the fifth report by the Secretaries-General of the institutions on trends in heading 5 of the financial perspective of May 2006,
 - having regard to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2007, together with the institutions' replies⁴,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A6-0057/2009),
- A. whereas, at this stage of the annual procedure, the European Parliament is awaiting the other institutions' estimates and its own Bureau's proposals for the 2010 budget,
- B. whereas it has been proposed to continue the pilot exercise on enhanced cooperation and relations between the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets, for a second year, throughout the 2010 budget procedure,
- C. whereas the ceiling of heading 5 in 2010 is EUR 8 088 000 000 (representing an increase of EUR 311 000 000 or of 4 % compared to 2009, including 2 % for inflation),
- D. whereas the European Parliament's budget for 2009 amounts to EUR 1 529 970 930, representing 19,67 % of heading 5 this year,

¹ OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1.

² OJ L 253, 7.10.2000, p. 42.

³ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 286, 10.11.2008, p. 1.

European Parliament

General framework

1. Cannot stress enough the fundamental principle that all Members should be equally provided with full and quality services allowing them to work and express themselves and to receive documents in their native language in order to be able to act on behalf of their electors in the best way possible; considers the new parliamentary term to be an opportunity to make sure this is the case and agrees that, in this sense, "optimal and equal access to language facilities for Members" will be one of the crucial guidelines for the 2010 budget;
2. Considers that, in line with its previous position, equal emphasis should be given to all aspects relating to Parliament's legislative role; in particular, the priority alignment of staff and related resources should primarily accommodate parliamentary work and decision-making in the area of co-decision;
3. Stresses that 2010 will be a year when the Parliament, following the 2009 European elections and the changes in its composition that that will bring, gradually resumes full activity during the year and notes that this will imply a certain number of budgetary adjustments; also notes that many items relating to the election year of 2009 specifically will no longer be needed;
4. Points out that 2010 will be a year of continued adaptation for the Parliament as concerns the improvement of its working methods and modernisation, which go hand in hand with its political and legislative responsibilities, and the evaluation concerning a series of major multi-annual initiatives launched during the past few years;
5. Confirms its intention to make the necessary provisions in view of a future possible enlargement of the Union to include Croatia;
6. Takes note of the fact that the financial ceiling of heading 5, administrative expenditure, will theoretically allow for an increase of 4 % or EUR 311 000 000; consequently notes that, as a yardstick, the voluntary 20 % share of the Parliament would still imply an "automatic" additional room for manoeuvre of EUR 62 000 000 calculated on the ceilings and EUR 87 000 000 compared to the real budget adopted for 2009; points out that there are, nevertheless, uncertainties as to the evolution of the EU-GNI and the circumstances in which the European Parliament has to operate;
7. Is expecting the Bureau to submit realistic requests when presenting the estimates, and is ready to examine its proposals on a fully needs-based and prudent basis in order to ensure an appropriate and efficient functioning of the institution;
8. Takes the view that a significant margin should be kept in the budget estimates, rather than creating a specific reserve, in order to safeguard the possibility for the new Parliament to set its own priorities once in place or adapting to changing circumstances while taking into account the 20% of the overall administrative expenditure;
9. Believes that, in the event of a future ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, any necessary adaptations requiring budget expenditure would have to be dealt with at that time according to the budgetary procedures in force;

10. Requests a detailed and clear overview of those budget lines that were under-implemented in 2008 and looks forward to analysing the reasons for this; also wishes to receive an account of all carry-overs and their use in 2008, as well as an update on the final assigned revenues compared to the amounts that were budgeted;
11. Welcomes the decision to prolong for a second year the pilot exercise on enhanced cooperation between its Bureau and Committee on Budgets, which should implement a streamlined budget procedure as well as allowing for more timely and transparent consultation on all parliamentary matters with significant financial implications; underlines that the practice as to when the Bureau consults the Committee on Budgets on matters with such financial implications could be improved, and wishes to clarify and define current practice in this regard;

Equal access to language facilities for Members of the European Parliament

12. Considers that 2010 should be a year when the utmost effort must be made so that Members of all nationalities and languages are treated equally in terms of their possibility to carry out their duties and all political activity incumbent upon them in their own language if they so choose;
13. Recognises that, in many instances and particularly at committee and group stages, restrictive deadlines increase the importance of negotiations among the main actors; nevertheless stresses the principle of democratic legitimacy through all its composite Members and their right to full multilingualism; therefore considers that this budget can and should be used to work towards this goal and find the correct balance between the multilingualism restrictions and the smooth completion of the legislative procedures;
14. Takes a keen interest in the question of multilingualism and asks the services for a presentation of the current situation and developments foreseen for 2010, including the application of the "Code" and possible room for further practical improvements, the pilot project on ad personam interpretation, including its criteria and usefulness for Members of different language backgrounds and also an overview of how the "physical barriers" to equal treatment (i.e. the absence of suitable meeting rooms, cabins etc.) will be eliminated over time; wishes to be assured as to how the new Parliament will be better equipped in all these matters compared to the situation for Members arriving with the last enlargements;
15. Is also of the opinion that all means must be sought to increase the flexibility of interpretation as a crucial step to ensure good working practices and notes that, in many instances, problems and financial wastage could be avoided if there were a possibility to swap languages at short notice depending on the actual attendance at meetings rather than the planned attendance;

Optimal use of resources to improve the European Parliament's legislative work

16. Emphasises that maximum care should be taken to ensure that the overall budgetary and staffing resources at the Parliament's disposal are used in the most cost-efficient way possible to enable the institution and its Members to fulfil their ultimate mission on legislation successfully; reiterates that this implies careful planning and organisation of its working methods and, whenever possible, the pooling together of functions and structures to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy, functional overlaps and duplication of effort;

17. Underlines that the growing co-decision powers put an additional strain on all of Parliament's services dealing with legislative work and will require high effectiveness as well as prioritisation of staff and related resources to enable Members to perform their duties correctly;
18. Recalls that a significant increase of staffing levels was agreed for 2009 although, at the same time, it was generally agreed that staff resources had now entered a phase of consolidation and that redeployment should be a continuous process following the very significant increases made with the recent enlargements; renews its call on all services and the political groups to provide full justifications for their requests from the outset of the procedure;
19. Looks forward to the suggestions from the working group on simplification of administrative procedures and believes that cost savings should be a natural consequence of its subsequent implementation;
20. Also asks that the requests by the political groups be included at the Estimates stage in the spring;
21. Believes that an analysis on how resources are used and how work is organised is sometimes necessary when specific problems are clearly identified and the objectives of the examination to be carried out are sufficiently specified, measurable and targeted; believes that in 2010, some specific sector(s) and projects could be identified and looked at in this way; recalls, at the same time, the importance of the screening exercise that took place during 2008; wishes for this exercise to be continued and deepened so that it can be taken into account when deciding on the 2010 estimates; recalls that changing circumstances of the newly elected Parliament, increased co-decision powers, as well as other changes, should also be taken into consideration;
22. Draws the Bureau's attention to the working conditions of the persons employed by the contractors operating in Parliament; calls on the Bureau, in this connection, to make sure that those firms fully comply with the applicable labour legislation;

Dissemination of information to Members

23. Stresses that since the major reform of "Raising the Game" launched some years ago, at least three new significant projects have been or are being established in order to provide information as complete and relevant as possible in relation to parliamentary work; notes the policy departments of committees, the analytical service of the library, and a knowledge management system in order to facilitate access to these and to many other resources available; also notes a number of other resources in the Parliament, such as, for example, the "legislative observatory"; warmly welcomes these efforts in order to make the Parliament more professional in the way it assists Members but considers that functional and budgetary stocktaking is necessary;
24. Considers it important for the 2010 procedure to clarify the situation for the benefit of all Members, including those dealing with the budgetary aspects, in order to define more clearly the different responsibilities and how to best arrange these initiatives in the most efficient way; would therefore welcome a hearing of the Committee on Budgets on how these are to be used, the current thinking with regard to the different elements, and how these will relate to each other; insists that the administration should also ensure exhaustive

information to the newly elected Members concerning the services to which they are entitled;

Communicating Parliament to citizens

25. Notes the Bureau's reference to the three major projects in the field of communication policy - europarlTV, the Visitors' Centre and the new audiovisual centre in the JAN building - the completion and consolidation of which represents a qualitative improvement to the communication instruments at the disposal of the institution; renews its commitment to monitor closely the development of these instruments and to maximise the real impact on public opinion;
26. Deplores the fact that the visitors' centre will not be established before the 2009 elections and requests full information as to the reasons behind this delay;
27. Takes note of the Bureau's decision concerning the "House of European History" and emphasises the need for a full and transparent consultation with the competent Committees on its concept, contents and budgetary aspects in line with the pilot procedure on enhanced cooperation between the Bureau and Committee on Budgets;

Buildings

28. Recalls that this sector is of high importance for the Parliament both in terms of meeting its current and future property needs as an institution and in terms of managing in the best way possible the property which it owns; recalls that any project in this context should safeguard the Parliament's financial interests; considers that events in 2008, although some were clearly not predictable, highlight the need for improvements in this area, taking into account the external report on the maintenance of buildings; also looks forward to receiving information concerning the proposals on a potential reorganisation of DG INLO, in view of the increased challenges for the European Parliament as a major property owner;
29. In this regard, reiterates its call to see a specific report and any possible recommendations concerning unnecessarily high maintenance, renovation and purchase costs relating to EU buildings, including the Parliament's; still wishes this to be a cross-cutting effort in order to establish the root causes, whether linked to a restricted market in any way, to burdens imposed by the Financial Regulation and public tendering, or to any other relevant factor; requests confirmation that the rule requiring the blacklisting of firms that have put forward unnecessarily high costs should be enforced;
30. Looks forward to receiving the medium- to long-term strategy paper on building policy, as called for already last year, in order to take the relevant decisions at first reading;

Continuation of various aspects from the 2009 procedure

31. Welcomes the Bureau's intention to continue to improve the legislative, linguistic and technical support to Members, which is obviously closely linked to a number of issues indicated above;
32. Agrees that the implementation in the first year of the new Statute for Members and the Statute for Assistants will need to be closely followed and considers that they must be consolidated in the best possible way, with a continuous update of the financial

implications and forecasts;

33. Continues to stress that improvements in the IT sector should not lead only to a greater capability to manage key aspects "in house" but also to demonstrate a greater potential to organise this area in a more cost-effective way; asks for a report clarifying the current situation and prospects regarding the internalisation of ICT experts and appropriate governance; calls on the Bureau to set out a clear strategy for Parliament's approach on ICT - including synergies with the political groups - before taking further steps in this area;
34. Welcomes the fact that environmental goals are mentioned in the Bureau's document and, following the previous "EMAS process" and work on the "carbon footprint", considers that 2010 will indeed provide an opportunity to continue these efforts, inter alia by the forthcoming adoption of a CO₂ action plan by the Bureau;

Other institutions

35. Welcomes the constructive co-operation with the other institutions during the last procedure and, as last year, urges them to present realistic and cost-based budget requests that take full account of the need to manage scarce resources in an optimal way;
36. Wishes to explore still further the possibility of better sharing the available resources between all Institutions, especially when there might be free capacity in one area which, if organised properly, could be taken advantage of and used in another area and/or institution;
37. Invites its rapporteur for 2010 to carry out individual visits to the Council, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, the Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor, in order to hear them before the estimates stage and to report back to its Committee on Budgets;

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38. 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 and the European Data Protection Supervisor.