

Resolution of 22 April 2004

§ 28 "Invites the Conference of Presidents to take into account the budgetary implications and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets before deciding on the annual work programme of interparliamentary delegations and delegations to Joint Parliamentary Committees and to respect the budgetary means envisaged for this purpose; reiterates its position that ad hoc delegations should be authorised only in exceptional circumstances, which could not have been foreseen when setting up the annual work programme; considers that an annual financial reference envelope should be set for ad hoc delegations;"

1. Appropriations against budget item 3700 (Miscellaneous organisational expenditure) are intended to cover expenditure related to the following activities¹:
 - Meetings of interparliamentary delegations
 - Delegations to Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs)
 - Delegations to Parliamentary Co-operation Committees (PCCs),
 - Activities related to the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA)
 - Electoral observation missions (ad hoc delegations)
 - Other ad hoc delegations
2. Meetings of interparliamentary delegations, JPCs, PCCs are authorised on the basis of an annual calendar, which is approved by the Conference of Presidents. Provision is made for these in the annual estimates of expenditure based on the average implementation rate and other known factors. While this would be the case in a "normal" year, particular circumstances apply in an electoral year as 2004. The structure of delegations for the new legislature was only adopted on 10 March 2004 and the new implementing rules on the work of delegations (which have a direct budgetary impact due to provisions on the rhythm of meetings and number of travelling Members, among others) will only be adopted in autumn 2004, which has made forecasting for the second half of 2004 difficult.
3. Activities related to the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) and its bodies also follow a regular rhythm of meetings which is decided by the Bureau of the JPA. This assembly has legal and operational autonomy as enshrined in the Cotonou Agreement (see also opinion of the EP Legal Service 24 June 1988 and 16 October 1989). Provision is made to cover this expenditure on item 3700. Specific JPA activities, however, are ruled by decisions taken by Parliament's Bureau, such as JPA fact-finding missions (decision of 1-3 October 2001), for which an annual budgetary envelope is fixed, and the experts that can be invited by the JPA and its bodies (decision of 12 January 2004). However, the decisions on the venues of meetings of the JPA and its bodies are taken autonomously by the JPA Bureau.

¹ For the purposes of this note, expenditure relating to item 1004 (Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure) and item 1301 (Mission expenses of Staff) is not considered.

4. Forecasting expenditure related to ad hoc delegations is more challenging, as these are authorised on a case-by-case basis by the Conference of Presidents. Over the years, the authorisation of ad hoc delegations, among others, has made transfers of appropriations towards item 3700 necessary. The resolution on the 2005 estimates calls for the setting of a "financial reference envelope" to cover expenditure related to ad hoc delegations.
5. There are two groups of ad hoc delegations:
 - Electoral observation missions: authorised by the Conference of Presidents on an individual basis. However, semestrial calendars are submitted to the Conference of Presidents for information, as foreseen in article 21 of the implementing provisions on the work of delegations.
 - Other ad hoc delegations: these are authorised by the Conference of Presidents following political imperatives and on an exceptional basis.
6. Expenditure on ad hoc delegations over the period 2002-2004 has been as follows:

Table 1
Ad hoc delegations 2002-2003-2004

year	number of delegations	Commitments	expenditure
2002	24	115.265	35.622
2003	20	81.060	36.647
2004 (*)	13	39.750	9232 (**)

*) From 1 January to 15 July: 13 delegations of which 2 without budgetary impact

**) Cost of 4 delegations not regularised yet.

7. A reference amount could be determined under the following conditions:
 - The reference amount is indicative. In the case of a shortfall, a transfer of an additional allocation must be possible to allow Parliament to react to political imperatives.
 - The amount could be based on the average level of expenditure of previous financial years, but should include a certain margin of manoeuvre to avoid having to submit transfer requests for relatively modest amounts to the Budgets Committee.
 - In order to facilitate the decision on the appropriate reference amount, the semestrial working programme for electoral observation missions should be submitted in February and August of each year, so that updated information is available in time for the adoption of the estimates of expenditure for Parliament in April/May and for the first reading of the Budget in October.
8. The advantage of such an approach lies in the increased awareness of budgetary implications: it is true that all dossiers submitted to the Conference of Presidents for decisions include a financial statement. However, a reference amount for this parliamentary activity could be useful to control total expenditure in the medium term.

9. The risk is that this reference amount would be considered as a ceiling. Parliament must remain in a position to be able to react in exceptional circumstances not envisaged by the annual programmes.
 10. Taking the above into account, a reference amount of EUR 60.000 could be envisaged for ad hoc delegations in 2005. The level of appropriations for the forthcoming year could then be re-examined on the basis of 2005 implementation figures.
-