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Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the financial years 2012-2013

Report¹

Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Mr Erol Aslan CEBEÇİ, Turkey, Group of the European People's Party

Summary

Recognising that it must play its part in the general reform process at the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly has set up an ad hoc committee on reform, whose proposals – after their adoption by the Assembly – should be implemented in January 2012. At the same time, the Assembly welcomes the decision by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Ministers to draw up the Council of Europe's budget and programme on a biennial basis for 2012 and 2013, but would like to see greater flexibility in its application.

1. Reference to committee: Standing mandate.



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A. Draft resolution²

1. In pursuance of Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers and Article 24 of the Financial Regulations, the Parliamentary Assembly issues an opinion each year concerning the appropriations relating to its operation. The amounts allocated to the Assembly appear in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe and cover its expenditure on staff and the costs associated with its own functioning and the functioning of its political groups.
2. In [Resolution 1783 \(2011\)](#) on the follow up to the reform of the Council of Europe, the Assembly declared its “commitment to a relevant and effective Council of Europe that is a natural guarantor of ‘soft’ security in a Europe based on the fundamental values and principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law”. In so doing, it reiterated its support for the reform process undertaken by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland.
3. However, the Assembly believes that the Council of Europe’s core business should not exclude the “enabling factors” of culture, education and social cohesion and migration issues, as they contribute to the realisation of the Organisation’s core values.
4. The Assembly recognises that it must play its part in the general reform process at the Council of Europe. In this connection, it has set up an ad hoc Committee on the Reform of the Assembly. The aims of the committee are to:
 - 4.1. strengthen the Parliamentary Assembly’s political relevance and effectiveness;
 - 4.2. make the Assembly more visible;
 - 4.3. improve Assembly members’ participation, while reinforcing interaction between the Assembly and national parliaments.
5. Over the last sixty years, the Assembly has gained significantly in influence within the Council of Europe’s institutional system. In addition to its two major powers (electing the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General and the Secretary General of the Assembly, as well as the judges of the European Court of Human Rights), it is a vital instrument in parliamentary democracy. In this respect, it must continue to constitute the pan-European forum for discussion and debate and thereby help to identify the best responses to the challenges facing European citizens.
6. To be more political and more efficient, the Assembly could take measures which would lead to changes both in its practices and also in its working methods and structures. That is the whole point of the terms of reference of the ad hoc Committee on the Reform of the Assembly. Any measures taken could enter into force in January 2012.
7. Without waiting for the conclusions of the ad hoc committee, the Assembly has already taken major steps in recent years to rationalise its work and reduce its expenditure. As recently noted by the external auditors, who examined the management of the Assembly in 2009 and 2010, the Assembly’s overall budget on a constant basis fell by 2% from 2005 to 2010. In particular, operational expenditure declined by 16% over the same period.
8. The Assembly has taken note of the results of the initial phase of reforms launched in 2010 by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, of which the first measure consisted in merging the programme of activities and the budget so as to present a more readable, better structured and more streamlined document. While understanding the thrust of the programme of activities, the Assembly continues to have reservations about being included under the democracy pillar – which does not properly reflect its importance as a statutory organ of the Organisation – as it already underlined in Opinion 279 (2010) on the budgets and priorities of the Council of Europe for the 2011 financial year.
9. With regard to the second phase of the reforms, the Assembly welcomes the decision by the Secretary General and the Committee of Ministers to draw up the budget and programme of the Council of Europe on a biennial basis for 2012 and 2013. This new approach is in line with the calls made many times by the Assembly in its previous opinions. However, the Assembly is disappointed that the decision is too inflexible regarding the carrying forward of unspent appropriations from year N to year N+1.

2. Draft resolution adopted by the committee on 20 May 2011.

10. The Assembly finds it regrettable that the new biennial programming remains subject to the strict current rule of zero real growth imposed by Council of Europe member states. It believes that maximum flexibility must be ensured in budget management for 2012-2013 and therefore would like unspent appropriations for 2012 to be carried forward to 2013.

11. With regard to its own expenditure, the Assembly has taken note of the request by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe that the Assembly's budget proposals for the years 2012 and 2013 be reduced by 0.75% (that is to say €109 100), of which 0.5% for 2012, in order to take account of compulsory adjustments.

12. It should be noted that following the decisions taken during the initial phase of the reforms concerning containment of staff expenditure, the compulsory adjustments to be covered in 2012 and 2013 are much lower than in recent years.

13. Wishing to contribute to the joint efforts and taking account of the budget difficulties affecting certain member states, the Assembly can agree to reduce its expenditure once again and decides that the reduction will be confined solely to expenditure on temporary staff. This measure will mean the Assembly secretariat having to revise its working methods, in particular concerning the operation of its four part-sessions.

14. In view of the major efforts already made, the Assembly does not wish to reduce its operational appropriations any further, in order to ensure that it is able to respond to the many political problems and find the best solutions to the challenges facing European citizens.

15. Noting the substantial share of extra-budgetary funds used for implementing the Council of Europe's programmes of activities, and building on the experience acquired in recent years with the co-operation programme for the parliaments of Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Moldova (funded with the support of the European Commission), the Assembly is considering stepping up its parliamentary assistance work. To this end, it has instructed the secretariat to draw up a proposed co-operation programme designed to attract voluntary contributions and respond more effectively to the specific needs of the parliaments of member states (or of states with "Partner for Democracy" status).

16. In keeping with the external auditor's recommendations, the Assembly has decided to include in its budget appropriations for information technology modernisation expenditure so as to ensure the development and maintenance of certain computer applications required for its specific needs. The relevant development work is carried out by the Assembly's Information Technology Unit in close co-operation with the central services of the Directorate of Information Technology. In this connection, a "charter" laying down the respective tasks of the two services could be drawn up.

17. Lastly, the Assembly welcomes the work done in the Assembly Chamber to equip it with modern communication technology and to restore this symbol of parliamentary democracy to its original splendour, while enabling substantial savings in electricity, heating and air-conditioning costs to be made in the medium term.

18. The Assembly believes that these investments greatly enhance this unique forum for meetings and dialogue, and hopes that the modernisation and upgrading work will be continued in future in line with the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan.

Appended to this resolution are:

- i. a table of the requests for 2012 and 2013, compared with the appropriations allocated in 2011;
- ii. a brief explanation of the main items of expenditure;
- iii. a table setting out the Assembly's work programme according to the results-based budgeting method.

Appendix 1

Parliamentary Democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly Démocratie parlementaire – Dépenses relatives à l'Assemblée	Expenditure foreseen as at 01/05/2011 Dépenses prévues au 01/05/2011	Appropriations for 2012 Crédits demandés au budget de 2012	Appropriations for 2013 Crédits demandés au budget de 2013
	€	€	€
HEAD 0310 – Functioning of the Assembly CHAPITRE 0310 – Fonctionnement de l'Assemblée			
Dépenses de personnel/Staff expenditure			
Sub-heads/Articles			
0000001 – Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts Rémunération du personnel recruté dans le cadre des emplois permanents	8 321 200 €	8 339 400 €	8 352 300 €
0000003 – Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary staff Rémunération et charges accessoires du personnel temporaire.	583 800 €	511 100 €	474 700 €
0000046 – Remuneration of staff on position Rémunération du personnel sur fonction à durée déterminée	455 400 €	455 400 €	455 400 €
0000005 – Salary, allowances and social charges of the Secretary General of the Assembly Rémunération, indemnités et charges sociales du Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée	261 600 €	261 600 €	261 600 €
0000016 – Recruitment, arrival and departure expenses – Home leave Frais de recrutement à l'arrivée et au départ – congé dans le pays d'origine	27000	27 000 €	27 000 €
0000379 – Contribution to the Pension budget Contribution au budget des pensions	1 308 400 €	1 308 400 €	1 308 400 €
Total dépenses de personnel Total staff expenditure	10 957 400 €	10 902 900 €	10 879 400 €
Supplies, services and other operational expenditure Dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement			
Sub-heads/Articles			
0000054 – Equipment Équipement.	11000	11 000 €	11 000 €
0000080 – Official journeys Frais de missions	261400	261 400 €	261 400 €
0000085 – Journeys of the Table Office reinforcement staff Frais de déplacement personnel de renfort – Service de la séance	200 000 €.	200 000 €	200 000 €
0000095 – Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly / Dépenses de représentation, frais de fonction et déplacement des Membres de l'Assemblée	160 000 €	160 000 €	160 000 €
0000114 – Prepress Pré-presse	43 000 €	43 000 €	43 000 €
0000115 – Interpretation Interprétation	1 897 200 €	1 866 600 €	1 866 600 €
0000116 – Translation Traduction	484500	484 500 €	484 500 €

Parliamentary Democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly Démocratie parlementaire – Dépenses relatives à l'Assemblée	Expenditure foreseen as at 01/05/2011 Dépenses prévues au 01/05/2011	Appropriations for 2012 Crédits demandés au budget de 2012	Appropriations for 2013 Crédits demandés au budget de 2013
	€	€	€
0000124 – Publishing and printing Publications et impressions	314400	285 800 €	285800
0000125 – Outsourced production of documents Production externalisée de documents	25 000 €	25 000 €	25 000 €
0000129 – Consultation of experts Consultation d'experts	148 600 €	150 000 €	150 000 €
0000162 – Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly Dépenses du Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée	61 700 €	70 000 €	70 000 €
0000163 – Official expenses of the President of the Assembly Frais de fonction du Président de l'Assemblée	92 500 €	92 500 €	92 500 €
0000171 – Organisation of ad hoc conferences Organisation de conférences ad hoc	87700	87 000 €	87 000 €
0000204 – Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment Modernisation de l'équipement de l'Assemblée	20 000 €	35 600 €	35 600 €
0000205 – European prizes Prix européens	80 000 €	80 000 €	80 000 €
0000206 – Operating and maintenance costs of the electronic voting system Coûts de maintenance et d'exploitation du vote électronique	39 000 €	39 000 €	39 000 €
0000250 – Co-operation and monitoring programme Programme de coopération et du suivi des engagements	540100	536 300 €	536 300 €
0000370 – Allocation to Assembly's political groups Dotation des groupes politiques de l'Assemblée	732 200 €	732 200 €	732 200 €
0000392 – Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote Autres dépenses non spécialement prévues au présent titre	80000	70 000 €	70 000 €
Total supplies, services and other operational expenditure Total dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement	5 278 300 €	5 229 900 €	5 229 900 €
TOTAL Parliamentary Assembly TOTAL Assemblée parlementaire	16 235 700 €	16 132 800 €	16 109 300 €

Appendix 2

Expenditure of the Assembly

– Staff expenditure

1. This appropriation corresponds to the basic salaries, allowances (non-recurring and periodic) and social cover of the permanent staff of the secretariat of the Assembly (87 posts, including 1 specially appointed official) and of temporary staff (including 6 positions).

2. In 2012 and 2013, the Secretary General of the Assembly will continue the reorganisation of the secretariat in line with the decisions taken by the Assembly as part of its reform. In particular, some measures could have an impact on the structure of the Assembly and the number of committees. The information given at present is based on the current structure of the Assembly comprising ten committees: nine of these committees have 84 members (and 84 alternates, apart from in the Monitoring Committee), and the remaining one has 27 (with no alternates). As at 1 November 2011, the secretariat will comprise 87 permanent posts, 6 positions and 1 specially appointed official, breaking down as follows:

Permanent posts:

1 specially appointed official		
1 A7	1 B6	1 C4
2 A6	5 B5	
9 A5	12 B4	
10 A4	16 B3	
23 A2/A3	7 B2	
Positions:		
4 A2/A3	1 B3	
	1 B2	

3. At present, the secretariat of the Assembly is organised so that the ten Assembly committees have 52 staff members working for them, including 30 A-grade permanent staff, 20 B-grade permanent staff and 2 A-grade permanent staff on fixed-term positions.

4. The remaining 41 staff members (37 permanent posts and 4 permanent staff on fixed-term positions) work for the Bureau of the Assembly, the Private Office of the President of the Assembly, the Table Office, the Interparliamentary co-operation and election observation Unit, the Parliamentary Assistance Unit, the Administration, Human Resources, Finance, Research and Documentation Division, the Communication Division and the Information Technology Unit.

– Supplies, services and other operational expenditure

5. Since 1975, following a decision by the Committee of Ministers, these allocations have been voted in the form of a single appropriation, which nonetheless continues to be divided into sub-heads. If the Assembly wished to change the relative amounts in the package at a later date, either because of an overall reduction or for any other reason dictated by the implementation of the budget, such a change would be carried out by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the Assembly's request and in accordance with Article 31 of the Financial Regulations.

6. In recent years, the Assembly has made substantial savings by rationalising its work to reduce its operational expenditure. In particular, the Assembly's overall budget on a constant basis fell by 2% from 2005 to 2010, while operational expenditure declined by 16% over the same period.

7. The experience acquired through joint programmes with the European Commission, such as those for the parliaments of Serbia and Montenegro (2006-2009) and more recently Moldova (2010-2011) should enable the Assembly secretariat to draw up a proposed assistance and co-operation programme suited to the needs of parliamentary institutions. The goal pursued is clearly to attract extra-budgetary funding (voluntary and/or European Union contributions) so as to respond appropriately to the specific needs of the parliaments of Council of Europe member states or partnership for democracy states.

8. In keeping with the external auditor's recommendations, the Assembly has included in its budget appropriations to meet expenditure for the development and maintenance of certain computer applications required for its specific needs which is not covered by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Information Technology (DIT).

9. In order to clarify the areas of responsibility of the DIT and the Assembly's Information Technology Unit, a document ("charter") laying down their respective responsibilities will be drawn up, as recommended by the external auditors.

10. The Assembly's committees will not cease to hold thematic hearings and conferences, which provide essential input for their work. The Assembly will also continue to co-operate closely with other European parliamentary assemblies (the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), etc), or international parliamentary assemblies (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Pan-African Parliament, Parlatino, etc).

11. The Sub-Committee on the Middle East will continue its co-operation with representatives of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council, pursuant to Assembly Resolution 1420 (2005) on prospects for peace in the Middle East and the decision of the Assembly Bureau on 18 March 2005.

12. The Assembly will also continue to support its political groups through their allocation, which is based on a lump sum for secretarial assistance paid to each of the existing groups along with an additional per capita amount which varies according to their membership.

13. To sum up, the draft budget for 2012 and 2013 in real terms (not including inflation and salary adjustments), which includes the pension costs for staff as well as a new article for prepress activities, amounts to:

2012: €16 132 800 2013: €16 109 300

The appropriations can be analysed as follows:

2012		2013
€9 594 500	Permanent and temporary staff	€9 571 000
€1 308 400	Contribution to the pension budget	€1 308 400
€1 866 600	Interpretation	€1 866 600
€484 500	Translation	€484 500
€285 800	Printing of documents	€285 800
€732 200	Allocation to the political groups	€732 200
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€14 272 000	Sub-total	€14 248 500
€1 860 800	Activities:	€1 860 800
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€ 16 132 800	Total	€ 16 109 300

14. The reduction in the Assembly's appropriations will lead it to make further changes to its working methods, procedures and structure so as to enhance its activities' relevance and effectiveness.

15. Lastly, although the financial situation is difficult, the Assembly wishes the work to modernise the Assembly Chamber to be continued in the coming years, depending on the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan. The modernisation should concern, in particular, installing sockets for portable computers on desks, refurbishing the presidential rostrum and changing the seats. In this respect, it wishes to thank the Council of Europe's central services, in particular the Directorate of Logistics, for the work already done in 2010 and early 2011 to renovate and modernise the Assembly Chamber.

Appendix 3

Functioning of the Assembly	
Intervention logic	Performance indicators
<p>Expected result 1 The part-sessions are efficiently organised and executed in line with Assembly members' expectations.</p>	<p>At least 50% of registered speakers have been able to take the floor. Adopted texts are transmitted to organisations concerned within the specified deadlines.</p>
<p>Expected result 2 Committee meetings, seminars and conferences take place in conformity with members' decisions.</p>	<p>Committee meetings are planned. Meeting agendas, documents and reports are available in time.</p>
<p>Expected result 3 Inter-parliamentary co-operation, observation of elections and assistance to parliaments are managed according to the political events.</p>	<p>Co-operation activities are organised according to needs and requests. Election observation missions are organised in accordance with decisions of the Bureau of the Assembly.</p>
<p>Expected result 4 The visibility of the Assembly is improved in the different member states</p>	<p>Activities of the Assembly are reflected in the media, with at least 10 000 articles in print media. Increase in the external audience of the Assembly's website.</p>

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Cebeci, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. This report gives a complete overview of the Assembly's expenditure and requests for the budget years 2012 and 2013. The Assembly's expenditure is included in the "Democracy" chapter of the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe. This covers all costs inherent in the Assembly's functioning, including expenditure on staff and costs associated with the functioning of the political groups. On the other hand, the budgetary appropriation does not cover telephone bills, office supplies and equipment or other consumables, which are items of expenditure common to all departments within the Organisation.

2. Biennial budget for 2012-2013

2. The proposals regarding the amount to be allocated to the Assembly for 2012 and 2013 have been made in accordance with the decision by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Ministers to draw up the budget and programme of the Council of Europe on a biennial basis for 2012 and 2013. The Assembly leaves it to the Directorate of Finance to assess, in due course, the adjustments that are, or may need to be, made to its allocation for 2012 and 2013 as a result of changes in salary scales and the provisions that need to be made for salary adjustments in 2012 and 2013. Similarly, it is for the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to adjust the other allocations, in due course, to take account of inflation.

3. It is, however, regrettable that the new biennial programming remains subject to the strict current rule of zero real growth imposed by Council of Europe member states. That is why a maximum flexibility must be ensured in budget management for 2012-2013 and it would therefore be desirable that any unspent appropriations for 2012 be carried forward to 2013.

3. The functioning of the Assembly

4. The functioning of the Assembly covers the following range of tasks:

- holding of the ordinary session divided into four part-sessions (taking place in January, April, June and September/October of each year);
- meetings of the Bureau and the Standing Committee between the part-sessions, held at a frequency of three meetings per year;
- meetings in either Strasbourg or Paris, lasting one or more days, at times other than the four part-sessions of the Assembly, for each of the ten general committees, the sub-committees, the ad hoc committees of the Assembly or of the Bureau and specialised working parties;
- committee or sub-committee meetings outside Strasbourg or Paris;
- conferences, colloquies, seminars and parliamentary hearings;
- activities coming under the Assembly's programme of interparliamentary co-operation;
- visits by rapporteurs to countries subject to monitoring of the honouring of member states' obligations and commitments or to the post-monitoring dialogue;
- election observation.

5. The Assembly recognises that it must play its part in the general reform process at the Council of Europe. In this connection, it has set up an Ad hoc Committee on the Reform of the Assembly. The aims of the committee are to:

- strengthen the Parliamentary Assembly's political relevance and effectiveness;
- make the Assembly more visible;
- improve Assembly members' participation, while reinforcing interaction between the Assembly and national parliaments.

6. Any measures taken could enter into force in January 2012.

4. Reducing the Assembly's expenditure for 2012-2013

7. The Assembly has already taken major steps in recent years to rationalise its work and reduce its expenditure. As recently noted by the external auditors, who examined the management of the Assembly in 2009 and 2010, the Assembly's overall budget on a constant basis fell by 2% from 2005 to 2010. In particular, operational expenditure declined by 16% over the same period (see Appendix).

8. Meanwhile, taking into account the current budgetary climate, we have to accept the request by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe that the Assembly's budget proposals for the years 2012 and 2013 be reduced by 0.75% (that is to say €109 100), of which 0.5% for 2012, in order to take account of compulsory adjustments.

5. Breakdown of expenditure for 2012-2013

9. To sum up, the draft budget for 2012 and 2013 in real terms (not including inflation and salary adjustments), which includes the pension costs for staff as well as a new article for prepress activities, amounts to:

2012: €16 132 800 **2013:** €16 109 300

10. The appropriations can be analysed as follows:

2012		2013
€9 594 500	Permanent and temporary staff	€9 571 000
€1 308 400	Contribution to the pension budget	€1 308 400
€1 866 600	Interpretation	€1 866 600
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€285 800	Printing of documents	€285 800
€732 200	Allocation to the political groups	€732 200
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€14 272 000	Sub-total	€14 248 500
€1 860 800	Activities:	€1 860 800
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€ 16 132 800	Total	€ 16 109 300

11. The reduction in the Assembly's appropriations will lead it to make further changes to its working methods, procedures and structure so as to enhance its activities' relevance and effectiveness.

6. Modernisation works

12. Although the financial situation is difficult, the Assembly wishes the work to modernise the Assembly Chamber to be continued in the coming years, depending on the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan. The modernisation should concern, in particular, installing sockets for portable computers on desks, refurbishing the presidential rostrum and changing the seats. In this respect, it wishes to thank the Council of Europe's central services, in particular the Directorate of Logistics, for the work already done in 2010 and early 2011 to renovate and modernise the Assembly Chamber.

Appendix

Part of the Parliamentary Assembly expenditure in the Ordinary Budget

