

Opinion 49 (1968)¹

Budget of the Council of Europe for 1969

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to paragraph 1 of Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers, which stipulates : "When drawing up the draft budget for the Council of Europe, the Secretary General shall consult the Assembly on that part of the draft budget which comprises the relevant operational appropriations. Such consultation shall take place in accordance with a procedure to be laid down by agreement between the President of the Assembly and the Secretary General." ;
2. Having regard to the Secretary General's letter of 15 March 1962 defining the procedure for consultation both as regards the part of the budget containing the estimate relating to the Assembly's operational expenditure and as regards the budget as a whole ;
3. Having regard to the budget of the Council of Europe for 1968 adopted by the Committee of Ministers and to the general accounts for the financial year 1966, being the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed and a discharge given ;
4. Bearing in mind where its own expenditure is concerned, the frequently repeated recommendation of the Committee of Ministers that the budget figures should not be appreciably higher than those for the preceding year,
5. Adopts the following opinion :

Part 1 Draft Vote III of the 1969 Budget (Expenditure of the Consultative Assembly)

It is proposed that Vote III of the 1969 budget be drawn up as set out below :

VOTE III EXPENDITURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY - Sub-head 64 - Remuneration of temporary staff

Estimate for 1969..... F. 628,000

Remuneration of days worked by temporary staff for sessions of the Consultative Assembly and meetings of its organs out of session time.

Article 32 of the Statute of the Council of Europe entitles the Assembly to meet for thirty days a year. However, in the light of experience, the estimate is based on eighteen days, on the understanding that this does not prejudice the Assembly's rights under the Statute.

Remarks :

The increase in the estimate is due to the application of new pay scales.

Sub-head 65 - Travel expenses and allowances for travel time

1. Assembly debate on 25 September 1968 (15th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2435](#), report of the Committee on the Budget). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 September 1968 (15th Sitting).



Opinion 49 (1968)

Estimate for 1969..... F. 135,000

Travel expenses and allowances for travel time for temporary staff recruited away from Strasbourg.

Remarks :

The increase in the estimate is due to the application of higher travel costs

Sub-head 66 - Sickness and accident insurance

Estimate for 1969.....F. 6,000

Share paid from the Council Budget (60%) of sickness and accident insurance premiums in respect of temporary staff remunerated under Sub-head 64.

Sub-head 67 - Technical staff seconded from national administrations

Estimate for 1969.....F. 38,000

Refund to various national administrations of the salaries of staff seconded to the Council for certain special services during Assembly sessions : travel expenses, subsistence allowances, and insurance for such staff.

Gratuities for special work performed by lower-grade staff of national administrations in connection with meetings of Assembly bodies outside Strasbourg.

Remarks :

Expenditure in 1967 was less than had been estimated, and the same will probably apply in 1968. This being so, and in view of the desire for economy that inspires the Assembly, the estimate for 1969 is reduced from 42,000 F to 38,000 F.

HEAD II - SUPPLIES AND SERVICES - Sub-head 68 - Publishing and printing

Estimate for 1969.....F. 260,000

Appendix

Official Assembly documents	F.
Specialised brochures	250,000
Circulation of certain adopted texts and supply of information to national parliaments	token entry
	10,000
	260,000

Opinion 49 (1968)

Remarks :

Official Assembly documents (item 1) : In view of the increase in the volume of the Assembly's official documents, there is reason to request an increase in the appropriation under Sub-head 68 to 260,000 F.

Sub-head 69 - Hire of cars

Estimate for 1969.....F. 8,000

Hire of cars for the Assembly and its organs.

HEAD III - OTHER OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE - Sub-head 70 - Representational, travel and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1969.....F. 41,000

Representational, travel and subsistence expenses incurred by the President of the Consultative Assembly in the course of his duties :

F.	24,000	41,000
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Fixed amount for representation
Travel and subsistence

Opinion 49 (1968)

Estimate for 1969.....F. 29,600

	F.
Special duties allowance	4,800
Remuneration of one shorthand typist	10,800
Official travel by staff	14,000
Sundry secretarial expenses token entry	
	29,600

Sub-head 72 - Representational and other official expenditure incurred by members of the Consultative Assembly

Estimate for 1969.....F. 87,500

	F.
Entertainment and similar expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and by committee chairmen and rapporteurs	13,000
Travel expenses and subsistence allowances of members of the Assembly attending, on behalf of the Council of Europe, meetings of certain Council bodies apart from sessions of the Assembly and its committees (Bureau of the Assembly, Joint Committee etc.), or undertaking official missions for the Assembly	47,500
Fixed amount granted to political groups to meet sundry expenditure incurred by members of the Assembly in the discharge of specific duties for the Council, such as secretarial assistance, documentation and travel expenses (Res. (58) 4 of 27 March 1958)	25,000
Accident insurance premiums for members of the Assembly travelling officially at the Council's expense (Decision of the Ministers' Deputies at their 108th meeting, March 1962 - Concl. (62) 108, point V)	2,000
	87,500

Remarks :

The estimate for 1969 is the same as the appropriation granted for 1968, the requirements for 1969 being at least as great as for 1968.

Sub-head 73 - Official journeys

Estimate for 1969..... F. 155,000

Official travel by staff of the Office of the Clerk and by Secretariat staff required to attend meetings of Assembly bodies away from Strasbourg, or to attend meetings of experts.

Remarks :

The increase in the estimate for 1969 is due to :

the increase in the number of staff members serving the committees ;

the need for the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly to be represented at meeting of international organisations dealing with subjects that appear on the Assembly agenda, in order to avoid duplication of work and keep the committees fully informed ;

the application of new scales for subsistence allowance, and the increase in travel costs

Sub-head 74 - Consultation of experts

Estimate for 1969.....F. 50,000

Remarks :

The question of more frequent consultation of independent experts by committees was considered jointly by the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly at the meeting of the Joint Committee on 7 March 1968.

The increase in the estimate for 1969 should enable available resources to be better adjusted to the Assembly's requirements.

Sub-head 75 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Estimate for 1969..... token entry

Remarks :

Requests for appropriations for holding ad hoc conferences will be embodied in separate Assembly recommendations if and as required.

Sub-head 76 - Expenditure not otherwise covered in this vote

Estimate for 1969.....F. 8,500

Sub-head 77 - Europe prize

Estimate for 1969.....F. 6,000

	F.
Europe prize	2,500
Provision for the cost of awarding the prize (travel and reception in honour of the mayor of the winning municipality, diploma and medal)	3,500
	6,300

1. The Assembly once again recalls that the Committee of Ministers has taken no decision as yet in regard to the appropriations required to implement Assembly [Resolution 188](#) of 29 September 1960 concerning the official languages of the Council of Europe.

This resolution was adopted in pursuance of Article 12 of the Council of Europe Statute which gives the Assembly an independent power to determine "in what circumstances and under what conditions other languages may be used".

The Assembly recommends that the appropriation necessary for the application of [Resolution 188](#) consequently be added to those appearing in Vote III of the 1969 budget.

2. The Assembly notes that the requests for increased appropriations set out above are extremely modest, since they would raise the total appropriations under Vote III from 1,358,600 F in 1968 to 1,452,600 F in 1969, i.e. by 94,000 F(6.9%), broken down as follows :

	F.
Sub-head 64 : Remuneration of F. temporary staff	+ 40,000
Sub-head 65 : Travel expenses and allowances for travel time	+ 5,000
Sub-head 67 : Technical staff seconded from national administrations	4,000
Sub-head 68 : Publishing and printing	+ 21,000
Sub-head 73 : Official journeys	+ 20,000
Sub-head 74 : Consultation of experts.	+ 12,000
	94,000

Apart from adjustments to appropriations due to the application of new scales of remuneration or allowances, the only increases requested are for the publication of official Assembly documents, official journeys and consultation of experts.

Part 2 - General remarks and proposals relating to votes other than Vote III - 1. General remarks

The Council of Europe budget for 1968 totals 39,377,336 F. Compared with the budget for the previous year (34,901,996 F) this means an increase of 4,475,340 F.

This increase includes an appropriation for exceptional expenditure amounting to 1,650,000 F.

The appropriations under Vote III -Expenditure of the Consultative Assembly-show an increase of 17,500 F (1.3%) over the previous year.

The general accounts relating to the financial year 1966 show cancelled appropriations to the amount of 938,288.04 F, or 2.951%. This percentage is very low, and the Assembly once more congratulates the Secretary General on the accuracy of his estimates .

The auditors have stated that they are satisfied that expenditure under the budget has been properly incurred and that the budget appropriations have been rationally and economically administered.

The Assembly fully endorses the auditors' statement.

2. Staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly

The Assembly recommends the establishment, in the Office of the Clerk, of an office to centralise the control of documents (Table Office).

In fact, it has been observed that in the past control has been inadequate and unsatisfactory ; it has been possible for texts to be tabled that conflicted with the Statute of the Council of Europe, the Assembly Rules of Procedure or Assembly practice ; moreover, bad drafting, faults in translation or serious printing errors sometimes gravely distort the content of texts or result in discrepancies between the texts in the two official languages

Under Rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure, the President of the Assembly decides whether texts and motions tabled in the Assembly are in order, and he requires to be judiciously advised on this matter.

The formation of this documents control office calls for the permanent creation of one A5 post and one post of private secretary ; the holder of the former must have wide experience of parliamentary law and practice, of the operation of the Council of Europe as a whole and particularly of the Assembly.

The Assembly also asks for the creation of a post of Documentation Assistant B4 ; this request is justified by the fact that documentation and archives work has hitherto been done piecemeal by private secretaries and shorthand-typists, to the detriment of their normal work, and without satisfactory results, because of the dispersal of labour.

3. Vote I - Common expenditure - Sub-head 3 (a) - Social insurance

The Assembly notes that the appropriation under this sub-head covers employers' contributions to the French Social Security Scheme (sickness and industrial accidents), in respect of the affiliation of working members of the staff.

Since pensioned staff members are not covered against risks of illness, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers take the necessary steps to ensure that they benefit from an appropriate scheme.

Sub-head 12 (d) - Repairs and alterations

The Assembly considers that the façade of the Council of Europe buildings should be cleaned, pending the availability of new buildings ; it recommends that the Committee of Ministers include the necessary appropriations in the budget.

Sub-head 14 - Maintenance of furniture and equipment - Sub-head 15 - Replacement and purchase

The Assembly notes that the furniture in the offices of political groups, national delegations and the Secretariat is old, worn-out and unsuitable ; it recommends that the Committee of Ministers include in the budget an appropriation to take into account the need gradually to replace old furniture, which should be renewed within a period to be fixed

As regards equipment and installations for simultaneous interpretation, the Assembly notes that the equipment in use no longer meets the requirements of its committees since the use of three or four working languages has become general ; it recommends that the Committee of Ministers include an appropriation for the purchase of adequate equipment as well as for the hire of equipment required for interpretation at meetings held elsewhere than in Strasbourg or Paris.

Sub-head 32 (f) - Exceptional expenditure on information

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Council of Europe, which will be celebrated on 5 May 1969, the Assembly intends to publish a booklet containing some brief biographical notes on all parliamentarians who have been members of the Assembly since 1949

The Assembly also advocates the organisation of model exhibitions on the Council of Europe in each member country, the material being supplied by the Organisation.

The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers include in the budget the necessary appropriations to enable this booklet and exhibition material, in several languages, to be made available in time.

4. Vote V - Expenditure in respect of local authorities - Sub-head 99 - Grant for intermunicipal exchanges

Referring to the wishes frequently expressed by the European Conference of Local Authorities, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers make a substantial increase in the subsidy it grants for intermunicipal exchanges

The Assembly draws particular attention to its [Recommendation 524](#), adopted on 10 May last, in which the Committee of Ministers is invited to change the Council of Europe annual grant into a Council of Europe Fund, the French and German Governments to contribute to this fund an annual grant of one thousandth of the budget of the Franco-German Office and the other member governments to contribute to the fund in the same proportion, according to their customary percentage share in the Council of Europe budget.

The appropriation calculated in accordance with this, i.e. 150,000 F, should be included under Sub-head 99 for the purposes of the Council of Europe Fund for the promotion of intermunicipal exchanges of young people.

5. Vote VI - Exceptional expenditure - Sub-head 101 - Installation expenses

The Assembly notes that the total number of hours of sittings tends to increase from one session to another ; a relatively large amount of time is therefore required when texts have to be voted by roll-call.

To prevent its work being interrupted too long by roll-call votes, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers include in the budget an appropriation for the installation of an electrical voting system

The time saved by adopting this system might enable the Assembly to get through its agenda without any need for debates in night sittings.

The electrical voting system installed must be sufficiently simple to be reinstalled in the new Assembly Hall it has been decided to build.

6. Council of Europe buildings

The Assembly notes that only the principle of erecting a new building has hitherto been adopted by the Committee of Ministers ; it recommends that Committee to take, as early as possible, the practical decisions relating to the start of work.

7. Payment of pensions to Council of Europe permanent staff

The Assembly intends to make a detailed examination of the pension scheme regulations for permanent staff of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers. It has, however, in view of the urgency of the matter, taken note of the transitional arrangements defining the rights of members of the staff in respect of their service prior to 1 January 1967.

These transitional arrangements stipulate that staff would be given two years to decide whether or not they wished to receive credit, for the purposes of the pension scheme, for their service between 1 January 1953 and 31 December 1966. This time-limit expires on 31 December 1968.

Under these circumstances, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers extend by two years, i.e. until 31 December 1970, the time-limit given to Council of Europe staff to take a decision on this subject.