



Opinion 55 (1970)¹

Budget of the Council of Europe for 1971

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 1970 adopted by the Committee of Ministers and to the general accounts for the financial year 1968, being the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed and a discharge given,
4. Adopts the following opinion :

Part 1

Draft Vote III of the 1971 Budget (Expenditure of the Consultative Assembly)

1. It is proposed that Vote III of the 1971 Budget be drawn up as set out below :

VOTE III

EXPENDITURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

HEAD I TEMPORARY STAFF

Sub-head 68 Remuneration of temporary staff

Estimate for 1971..... 1,115,500.00

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 one month a year.

The Assembly has fixed the duration of the 1970 Session at 25 days and the estimate for 1971 has been calculated on the same basis. Not all members of the Assembly have been satisfied with the arrangement adopted as an experiment for 1970. The Standing Committee is studying the problem of the organisation of Assembly sessions and some changes may well be made in the course of 1971.

The Assembly accordingly reserves the right to request supplementary appropriations in the course of the year if need be.

1. Assembly debate on 25 September 1970 (19th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2807](#), report of the Committee on the Budget). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 September 1970 (19th Sitting).



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Remarks :

Subject to the above proviso, the estimate for 1971 is the same as the appropriation for 1970. It would, of course, have to be adjusted if there were any change in the remuneration of this category of staff during the year.

Sub-head 69 Travelling expenses and allowances for travelling time

Estimate for 1971..... 190,000.00

Travelling expenses and allowances for travelling time of temporary staff engaged outside Strasbourg.

Remarks :

The increase has been calculated to meet requirements on the basis of actual expenditure in 1969 and the estimates for 1970.

Sub-head 70 Sickness and accident insurance

Estimate for 1971 20,000.00

Share paid from the Council Budget of sickness and accident insurance premiums in respect of temporary staff remunerated under Sub-head 68.

Remarks :

The increase is due to the conclusion of a new insurance contract providing improved cover for temporary staff recruited for Assembly sessions.

Sub-head 71 Technical staff seconded from national administrations

Estimate for 1971 50,000.00

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

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

Remarks :

The estimate has been reduced by 4,000 FF in order to keep more closely to actual requirements.

HEAD II SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Sub-head 72 Publishing and printing

Estimate for 1971 400,000.00

1. Official Assembly documents.
2. Distribution of certain adopted texts and supply of information to national parliaments.

Remarks :

Further measures have been taken to contain expenditure on the publication of official documents of the Assembly ; for this reason the estimate is substantially the same as the appropriation for 1970. It has been rounded off to 400,000 FF (reduction : 9,000 FF).

Sub-head 73 Hire of cars

Estimate for 1971 11,000.00

Hire of cars for the Assembly and its organs.

HEAD III OTHER OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

Sub-head 74 Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Consultative Assembly

Estimate for 1971 48,000.00

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

fixed amount for representation 31,000.00

travel and subsistence 17,000.00

Sub-head 75 Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Consultative Assembly

Estimate for 1971 31,000.00

special duties allowance 4,800.00

remuneration of one shorthand typist 9,700.00

official journeys of staff 16,500.00

sundry secretarial expenses token entry

Remarks :

The estimate for 1971 is the same as the appropriation for 1970. However, the special duties allowance has remained unchanged for several years. If it were to be decided to alter such allowances payable within the organisation, the estimate would have to be revised accordingly.

Sub-head 76 Representational, travelling and other official expenditure incurred by members of the Consultative Assembly

Estimate for 1971 173,000.00

entertainment and similar expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and by the committee Chairmen and Rapporteurs 22,000.00

travel and subsistence for members of the Assembly attending, on behalf of the Council of Europe, meetings of certain Council bodies other than sessions of the Consultative Assembly and its committees (Bureau of the Assembly, Joint Committee etc.), or travelling on Assembly business 122,000.00

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 of Europe, such as secretarial assistance, documentation and travel expenses (Resolution (58) 4 of 27 March 1958)..... 27,000.00

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) 2,000.00

Remarks :

The Assembly has already pointed out in [Opinion No. 52](#) that the present appropriation is not enough to cope with the extension of its activities, as instanced by its relations with the United States Congress, the Canadian Parliament, the Latin-American Parliament etc. This situation restricts parliamentarians' travel to those countries and is an obstacle to the development of the Assembly's activities in this field.

In [Opinion No. 52](#), the Assembly advocated that there should be a specific appropriation for this purpose from 1971 onwards.

The Assembly has received a provisional invitation to send a delegation of ten to fifteen members to Ottawa in 1971. Their travelling and subsistence expenses should be paid by the Council of Europe so as to enable the Assembly to appoint a homogeneous and completely representative delegation, which is not possible when the costs borne by national parliaments.

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From 1971 onwards, it should be considered normal for such travelling and subsistence expenses to be included in the Budget of the Council of Europe. In future, provision should be made for such journeys every year. The specific estimate for 1971 is 60,000 FF.

Apart from the effect of the above proposal, the higher estimate for 1971 is due also to increases in the representational and similar expenditure incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and by committee Chairmen and Rapporteurs (increase : 4,000 FF).

Sub-head 77 Official journeys

Estimate for 1971 170,500.00

Official journeys 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 higher estimate is due to the increase in 1970 in daily allowances payable to staff on official journeys. It may be necessary to adjust it if there is a change during the year in railway fares or in the scales of allowances for official journeys.

Sub-head 78 Consultation of experts

Estimate for 1971 70,000.00

Remarks : By reason of the nature of the work which consultants are asked to do on behalf of Assembly committees, it is increasingly difficult to obtain the services of qualified experts because the fees offered them are too low. The increased estimate is intended to enable committees' requirements to be met.

Sub-head 79 Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Estimate for 1971 250,000.00

Remarks : In 1971 the Assembly plans to organise the following conferences :

Third Parliamentary and Scientific Conference ;

Second Symposium of members of parliament specialising in public health questions (Stock-holm) ;

Second Symposium on the legal Systems of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Strasbourg) ;

Parliamentary Conference on Human Rights (Strasbourg or Rome).

All expenditure relating to these conferences is combined under this sub-head in order to indicate their ad hoc nature from both the operational and the budgetary point of view.

However, in view of their cost and the increase in the estimate under this sub-head, it is highly desirable that the host countries should help to meet the expenditure, as in the case of previous ad hoc conferences.

At the present stage, however, the estimate for 1971 should be sufficient to cover the organisation of the above-mentioned conferences.

Sub-head 80 Expenditure not otherwise covered in this vote

Estimate for 1971 11,500.00

Sub-head 81 Europe Prize

Estimate for 1971 10,000.00

The Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities will decide what proportion of this sum should be earmarked for the Prize itself and what proportion kept for expenses in connection with the presentation of the Prize.

Remarks :

This appropriation has remained unchanged for several years and should be increased (increase : 4,000 FF).

2. The Assembly has long been pre-occupied by the question whether other languages than English and French should not be used in the Council of Europe. It does not find the present situation conducive to the smooth progress of its work and would like to know the attitude of the Committee of Ministers in the matter.

If a decision to amend the present situation were to be taken in the course of the year, the estimates under Vote III of the Budget would have to be increased.

3. The Assembly notes that the higher estimates resulting from the above proposals would raise the total under Vote III from 2,215,000 FF in 1970 to 2,550,500 FF in 1971, i.e. an increase of 335,500 FF made up as follows :

<i>Sub-head 69 Travelling expenses and allowances for travelling time</i>	<i>+ 40,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 70 Sickness and accident insurance</i>	<i>+ 11,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 71 Technical staff seconded by national administrations</i>	<i>4,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 72 Publishing and printing</i>	<i>9,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 76 Representational, travelling and other official expenditure incurred by members of the Consultative Assembly</i>	<i>+ 64,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 77 Official journeys</i>	<i>+ 5,500.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 78 Consultation of experts</i>	<i>+ 14,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 79 Organisation of ad hoc conferences</i>	<i>+ 210,000.00</i>
<i>Sub-head 80 Europe Prize</i>	<i>+ 4,000.00</i>
	<i>335,500.00</i>

The major increases are in travelling expenses for members of the Assembly and, above all, the organisation of ad hoc conferences.

Part 2

General remarks and proposals relating to votes other than Vote III

1. General remarks

The Council of Europe Budget for 1970 totals 52,772,008.23 FF or 7,684,882.50 FF more than the Budget for the previous year (45,087,125.73 FF).

This increase includes :

- a frozen appropriation of 1,710,000 FF for cost-of-living allowances ;*
- an appropriation of 1,317,755.23 FF carried forward for initial expenditure on setting up the permanent European Youth Centre ;*
- the effects of the devaluation of the French franc and the longer Assembly sessions, i.e. approximately 1,000,000 FF.*

The general accounts for the financial year 1968 show cancellations of appropriations to an amount of 543,542.18 FF, i.e. 1.3%. This percentage is very small indeed, 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 takes careful note of the Auditors' findings.

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

(a) The Committee of Ministers has approved the creation, with effect from 1 January 1970, of a permanent A5 post to enable an office to be set up, in the Office of the Clerk, to centralise the control of documents (Table Office).

To assist with the setting-up of this new office, an official from the Assemblée Nationale and another from the House of Commons were temporarily seconded to the Secretariat during this year. An appointment will be made next year in the light of the experience thus gained. It now becomes necessary, therefore, to request the Committee of Ministers to create a new B3 post (secretary to the official in charge of the new office).

(b) The Assembly has been informed of the Secretary General's plan to set up a new Directorate of Local Authorities and Environmental Problems, which would involve transferring to it certain activities which are at present under the control of the Clerk but are independent of the Assembly. In the circumstances, it was suggested that a head of division might be transferred from the Office of the Clerk while retaining responsibility for several Assembly activities. On the other hand, the present number of posts of head of division is essential to the effective supervision of the secretariats of the thirteen committees. The Assembly therefore strongly recommends that this number should be maintained so as to avoid any impairment of efficiency of the Office of the Clerk.

3. Vote I Common expenditure

Expenditure on furniture and equipment

The Assembly recalls that the Committee of Ministers, in replying to [Opinion No. 52](#), spoke of reexamining the question of modernising and partially replacing equipment when considering the next Budget.

The Assembly draws attention once again to the need to improve the organisation's operating conditions and feels, in particular, that it has become a matter of great urgency to settle the question of interpretation equipment for meetings held in places other than Strasbourg. Particularly the equipment of the Paris Office should be replaced in order to enable committees to work under satisfactory conditions.

The Assembly accordingly recommends to the Committee of Ministers that provision be made for the purchase or hire of adequate equipment.

Library expenditure

The Assembly considers that substantial improvements need to be made in the functioning of the Council of Europe Library.

It is recommended that the Committee of Ministers vote an appropriation for improving the organisation of this department.

4. Council of Europe buildings

The Assembly welcomes the Committee of Ministers' decision to accept France's generous offer of a loan of 70 million francs for the erection of new Council of Europe buildings and notes with satisfaction the appointment of Mr. Henry Bernard as architect.

It is urged, however, that all the other problems involved receive speedy consideration, so that the necessary decisions can be taken as soon as possible.

The Assembly requests the Committee of Ministers to keep it regularly informed of the progress made in this field and hopes that the preliminary plans will be submitted to it, so that it can express an opinion in good time.

5. Pension Scheme Regulations applicable to Council of Europe permanent staff

The Assembly considers that the staff of the Council of Europe have still not received the information essential for their decision as to whether or not it is in their interest to receive credit for their service between 1 January 1953 and 31 December 1966.

Under these circumstances, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers extend by two years, i.e. until 31 December 1972, the time-limit given to Council of Europe staff to take a decision on this subject.