Opinion 82 (1977)[1]

Programme-budget for the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1978

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 of 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 to the President of the Assembly, laying down the procedure for consultation both on the part of the budget which contains estimates of the Assembly's operational expenditure and on the budget as a whole ;

3. Having regard to the procedure concerning the budgetary powers of the Assembly, as agreed between the President of the Assembly and the Secretary General and approved by the Bureau of the Assembly on 25 January 1973 ;

4. Having regard to the letter from the Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies to the President of the Assembly dated 30 June 1975 on the budgetary package to which the Assembly has been entitled since 1976 ;

5. Having taken note of the reply by the Committee of Ministers to its Opinions Nos. 75 (1976), 77 (1976) and 79 (1976) on its operational expenditure (Doc. 3965) ;

6. Regrets that the Committee of Ministers has not followed up the request formulated in its Opinion No. 79 (1976), for an increase in the appropriations for the political groups, and emphasises how important and essential it considers they are for its own efficient operation ;

7. Deeply regrets that the Committee of Ministers found it necessary to reduce in real terms the appropriations for the consultation of experts, thus preventing the Assembly from seeking as much technical advice as it needs, and leaving less money available for scientific co-operation to which it continues to attach the highest importance ;

8. Regrets also that its request concerning a change in the administrative structure of the Clerk's Office has been rejected once more, so that the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly has not yet recovered the A6 post of head of department which it had on a provisional basis from 1971 to 1973 ;

9. Notes with deep concern that the appropriations for operational expenditure in its budgetary package for 1977 are, in real terms, distinctly lower than those for 1976, although the overall budget of the Council of Europe has increased slightly, even if the appropriations to meet the cost of taking over the new building are not taken into account.

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1. Assembly debate on 25 April 1977 (1st Sitting) (see Doc. 3964, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 1977 (1st Sitting).

10. Suggests consequently that a joint study should be undertaken by the Assembly and national delegations, with the object of enabling national parliaments to take separate decisions on the Assembly's operational expenditure whenever the Council of Europe's total budget is referred to them ;

11. Emphasises once more the importance it attaches to its earlier specific requests, which it is now compelled to renew, although the amounts involved are low enough to allow fully for the difficult economic situation faced by the governments of member states at the present time ;

12. Having regard to Recommendation 806 (1977), on the European Museum Award, adopted by the Standing Committee on 18 March 1977 ;

13. Adopts, accordingly, the following opinion concerning its operational expenditure (Vote III of the Council of Europe budget).

A. Summary table of requested increases in real terms for 1978, compared with initial appropriations for 1977

Appendix

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1977[2]	Increases or reductions in real terms proposed for 1978
HEAD XX – Staff	F	F
Sub-heads		
Clerk of the Assembly		
82 - Salary, allowances and social charges	330 000	
Staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly		
83 - Remuneration - permanent staff	5 510 000	
83 bis - Assembly staffing changes		191 000
84 - Expenses on arrival and departure, home leave	58 000	
85 - Overtime and allowances for exceptional duties	32 000	15 000
86 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis	p.m.	
87 - Remuneration and accessory charges for temporary conference staff	3 730 000	8 000
88 - Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration	640 000	
TOTAL HEAD XX	10 300 000	214 000
HEAD XXI		
88 bis - Allocation to political groups	[3]	155 000
VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1977[4]	Increases or reductions in real terms proposed for 1978
HEAD XXII - Supplies and services and other operational expenditure	F	F
Sub-heads		
89 - Publishing and printing	592 000	100 000
90 - Hire of cars	15 000	
91 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly	104 000	10 000
92 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	66 000	
93 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of the members of the Assembly :		
a. fixed allocation for the political groups	145 000[5]	
b. representational expenditure	141 000	9 000
94 - Official journeys	306 000	30 000
95 - Consultation of experts	370 000	37 000
96 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences	198 000	

2. Appropriation adjustments will doubtless be necessary after the adjustment to be made to staff salary scales in 1977. The amount of these adjustments cannot yet be determined, but it will be covered in principle by the provision entered under Sub-head 88.
3. Former Sub-head 93.a.
4. See footnote 1 on previous page.
5. Becomes Sub-head 88 bis.

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1977[2]	Increases or reductions in real terms proposed for 1978
97 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote	36 000	
98 - Exceptional expenditure	20 000	
99 - Europe Prize	24 000	
99 bis - Council of Europe Museum Prize		14 000
99 ter - Fixed contribution towards the use of a computer	p.m.	
TOTAL HEAD XXII	2 017 000	180 000
TOTAL VOTE III	12 317 000	549 000

B. Detailed explanations of the increases in real terms requested

Introduction

1. As already explained in earlier opinions, the changes requested for 1978 are to be regarded as increases in real terms over the appropriations made to the Assembly for 1977.

2. As in previous years, the Assembly leaves it to the Secretariat administration to assess in due course, in the same way as for other sectors of the draft budget submitted by the Secretary General, the adjustments to appropriations still required in 1977 as a result of pay scale changes and their consequences for 1978, and also the provision to be made for pay adjustments in 1978.

3. For these reasons, as in the past, the final estimates for the head concerning staff expenditure are not shown here.

4. Similarly, it will be for the Secretariat to evaluate the effect of inflation on the other 1978 estimates and adjust them accordingly.

5. The estimates entered here under Head XXII (supplies and services and other operational expenditure), which constitute the budgetary package, will therefore have to be adjusted before the budget is adopted.

6. The Assembly's estimates for 1978 will thus be determined by the total 1977 Assembly appropriations (including the supplementary appropriations voted in the course of the year), to which will be added :

the increases in real terms requested in this opinion ;

the technical adjustments to be made by the Secretariat as indicated in the foregoing paragraphs.

7. Lastly, it is pointed out that the appropriations under Vote III referred to in this opinion relate directly to the operation of the Assembly, and do not cover installations, supplies or equipment.

Analyses of estimates according to budget classification

Head XX - Staff

Sub-head 82 - Remuneration, allowances and social charges in respect of the Clerk of the Assembly

This covers salary, allowances and other charges in respect of the Clerk of the Assembly as provided in Resolution (71) 8 of 26 March 1971, last amended by Resolution (72) 48 of 24 November 1972.

Sub-head 83 - Remuneration of permanent staff

This relates to the staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly (basic salaries, non-recurring and regular allowances, social insurance and pension fund contributions).

The present numerical breakdown of staff is as follows :

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2. Appropriation adjustments will doubtless be necessary after the adjustment to be made to staff salary scales in 1977. The amount of these adjustments cannot yet be determined, but it will be covered in principle by the provision entered under Sub-head 88.

Posts	Secretariat of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Private Office of the President	Div. I	Div. II	Div. II	Table Office	Total
A7	1				1	
A5		1	1	1	4	
A4	1	3	2	1		7
A2/A3		4	4	3		11
B5	1				1	2
B4	1				1	2
B3	2	5	4	3	1	15
B2				2		2
Total	6	13	11	10	4	44

Sub-head 83 bis - Staffing changes requested for the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly

Nature of change	Assignment	
News posts	1 A2/A3	Committee secretary
	1 B3	Secretariat of the committees
New posts (token entry)	1 B3	Scientific co-operation
Upgrading	1 A5 to A6	Head of department
Upgradings (token entry)	1 B3 to B4	Central support unit
	2 B2 to B3	Bilingual assistants

Comments

8. The readmission of Greece in 1974, the accession of Portugal in 1976 and the possible accession of Spain in the near future naturally have some effect on the work of the Assembly and the structures of the Clerk's Office.

9. In general, because of the growth in the number of members of the Assembly and its committees, the accession of a new state increases the work of the Clerk's Office at all levels, particularly in the first months and years following accession. Any new accession naturally results in more parliamentarians taking initiatives and more action by the political groups, and hence the production of an increasing number of documents and reports. The readmission of Greece, the accession of Portugal and that of Spain will together increase the number of parliamentarians by about 20 %, thus fully justifying an increase in the staff assigned to the Clerk's Office.

10. Furthermore, when preparing committee reports, the Secretariat is compelled to broaden and deepen its knowledge of the new member state by procuring fuller documentation in a wide range of fields (political, economic, cultural, social, scientific, legal and others).

11. Lastly, it is desirable, if not essential, for one official on the Assembly's administrative staff to have a good knowledge of the new member state's language.

12. Accordingly, having regard to the readmission of Greece, the accession of Portugal and the possible accession of Spain, and having regard to the fact that the number of committee meetings and reports is constantly increasing, and that the administrative departments' staffing table has not changed in recent years, the Assembly requests the creation for 1978 of an additional A2/A3 post of committee Secretary and of a B3 post of bilingual assistant.

13. In its Opinions Nos. 65 (1974), 70 (1975) and 75 (1976), the Assembly asked that its staffing table should include an A6 post of head of department, as was provisionally the case between 1971 and 1973. In spite of its insistence and of promises made at different levels, no solution has been reached. The Committee on the Budget and the Assembly feel that this situation is no longer acceptable. They are convinced that 1978 will bring the solution.

14. Although well aware of the budgetary restrictions affecting the Council of Europe in general, which have made it impossible in recent years to upgrade any post under the ordinary budget, the Assembly is of the opinion that the negligible effect on the budget (about 9 000 F) should make it possible at long last to comply with this request, which affects above all the organisation of its administrative departments. The Assembly is accordingly now repeating this request, for the fourth time, among its budgetary proposals for 1978.

15. The request concerning the A2/A3 post having been granted, the Assembly itself decided not to repeat its request for a B3 post for 1977, nor will it do so for 1978. Accordingly, this request is repeated here only for the record.

16. The Assembly also wishes it to be put on record that in 1974 it proposed a reorganisation of its administrative departments following a recommendation by the Management Survey Team. Its proposals were met in part in 1975, but the upgrading of a B3 post to B4 is still awaited.

17. The Assembly also points out that two B2 posts still need to be upgraded to B3, and it refers in this connection to the arguments set out in particular in its Opinions Nos. 62 (1973) and 70 (1975). Again with a view to economy, these requests are also only mentioned for the record.

Sub-head 84 - Expenses on arrival and departure -home leave

This sub-head covers :

travelling and removal expenses of the staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly and their families on taking up their duties or on their departure ;

settling-in allowance ;

refund of travelling expenses of non-French staff and their families taking home leave.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the 1978 appropriation be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1977.

Sub-head 85 - Overtime - allowances to permanent staff for exceptional duties

This estimate is to cover :

a. overtime worked during sessions of the Assembly by permanent staff in the general departments ;

b. language allowance, until they have been upgraded to B3, for B2 staff in the Office of the Clerk giving proof of an adequate knowledge of the two official languages (Resolution (72) 32) ;

c. allowances payable under Article 12 of the Staff Regulations to officials assuming special responsibilities ;

d. deputising allowances ;

e. expenses of candidates called for recruitment tests.

Comments

The first part-session held in January 1977 in the new building showed that the overtime worked by permanent members of the general departments was considerably higher than during previous sessions. Caretaking of the new building during sessions calls for more staff and the appropriations for it are inadequate. Accordingly the Assembly requests that the appropriations under this sub-head be increased by 15 000 F.

Sub-head 87 - Remuneration and accessory charges in respect of temporary staff

This covers remuneration of staff recruited temporarily to the Office of the Clerk to fill permanent posts which are vacant or not remunerated (long-term illness).

Comments

Since the expenditure will be covered by the transfer of the appropriations available under Sub-head 83, this appropriation appears only as a token entry.

Sub-head 87 - Remuneration and accessory charges in respect of temporary staff

This covers remuneration and social charges for temporary staff (session staff, workshop staff, messengers, technicians, translators and, above all, interpreters) assigned to the Office of the Clerk during those sessions and meetings of the Assembly and its committees scheduled in the programme for 1978 at the time of drafting this opinion.

Comments

18. The opening of the new building has shown that the number of temporary staff (messengers) needs to be increased. The longer distances to be covered, the larger number of doors giving access to the Assembly Chamber, the greater number of offices of the national parliamentary delegations and the political groups and the greater distances between them require a minimum of eight extra messengers. The Assembly requests an increase of 8 000 F on the basis of the present 20 session days.

19. However, should the Assembly have to alter its timetable for 1978, e.g. by holding four part-sessions instead of three within the statutory one-month limit, it reserves the right to submit a supplementary estimate if this should prove necessary.

Sub-head 88 - Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration

The estimate under this sub-head is to cover adjustments to the remuneration of staff allocated to the Office of the Clerk made after the date of completion of the draft budget (see also introduction above).

Head XXI

Sub-head 88 bis - Fixed allocation to political groups

Estimate for 1978 - 300 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 145 000 F

Increase - 155 000 F

This is to cover “miscellaneous expenses incurred by members of the Assembly in the discharge of specific duties for the Council of Europe, such as those for secretarial assistance, documentation and travel” (Resolution (58) 4 of the Committee of Ministers, of 27 March 1958).

Comments

20. This estimate appears for the first time in the Assembly budget under a separate sub-head outside the budgetary package. As already said in Opinion No. 79 (1976) and Assembly Doc. 3863, the Assembly believes that the method of allocation and management of these funds should be a matter for the Assembly alone to decide (political groups, Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme, Bureau) and not for the Council of Europe Secretariat. In its reply to Assembly Opinion No. 79 (1976), the Committee of Ministers also stated that it would be appropriate to enter this item of expenditure under a separate sub-head, not included in the Assembly's budgetary package (cf. Doc. 3965).

21. In its budgetary proposals for 1977, the Assembly requested that these appropriations should, as a first measure, be increased from 132 000 F to 300 000 F in real terms. But when adopting the 1977 budget, the Committee of Ministers did not feel that this increase was acceptable for 1977.

22. The Assembly points out that the appropriations are intended in the first place to give more secretarial assistance to the political groups and to make them independent of the administrative services of the European Parliament. They are also intended to cover the cost of seminars, study visits and other journeys made by parliamentarians on behalf of the political groups.

23. The Assembly recalls the arguments already advanced on previous occasions, and points out that it attaches considerable importance to the strengthening of the structures of its political groups as something it considers essential for political work at European level. The Assembly feels that the present situation, in which the political groups enjoy the co-operation of the political secretariats of the European Parliament, is no longer

acceptable, particularly now that the accession of a new member state has increased the numbers of non-Community states, and because of the clearly expressed desire on the part of some of our Assembly's political groups not to be dependent on their counterparts in the European Parliament.

24. Accordingly, the Assembly repeats its request that this fixed allocation be increased to 300 000 F in real terms in the 1978 budget.

25. In the light of the Assembly's supplementary opinion on the programme-budget for its operational expenditure in 1977 (Doc. 3863), this sum might be apportioned as follows :

fixed grant for secretarial assistance for 30 days a year, at 300 F per day, for each of the five existing groups and the parliamentarians not belonging to a political group, i.e. 9 000 X 6 = - 54 000 F

an additional per capita allocation of 800 F, to be multiplied by the total number of members of the groups, i.e. 800 X 298 = - 238 000 F

the remaining amount for miscellaneous expenditure by all groups, whose balance would be shared among them at the end of the year - 7 600 F

300 000 F

Budgetary package

Head XXII - Supplies and services, and other operational expenditure

Sub-head 89 - Publishing and printing

Estimate for 1978 - 692 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 592 000 F

Increase - 100 000 F

This covers publishing and printing costs relating to :

official Assembly documents, i.e.

1 000 bilingual copies of the Working Papers for sittings (2 800 - 3 000 pages),

700 copies in each official language of the Official Report of Debates (1 200 - 1 400 pages) ;

distribution and translation of reports and documents adopted by the Assembly and its committees, as well as circulation and translation by national parliaments of certain texts adopted.

Comments

26. The increase in the number of documents produced by the Assembly during recent part-sessions, together with a considerable rise in costs, has made the estimate hitherto entered under this sub-head distinctly inadequate. Furthermore, the membership of the Assembly has increased substantially, and this entails a corresponding increase in the number of copies printed of each document. In fact, the volume of printing rose by 45 % between 1974 and 1976, and the cost of printing index from 100 to 131.5. Since this is institutional expenditure that cannot be cut, the Assembly requests an increase of these appropriations.

27. The Assembly furthermore considers it essential that its reports should be better publicised, and that to date they have been circulated on too restricted a scale. It is, accordingly, considering having off-prints brought out of its reports, accompanied by summaries. It therefore proposes that the appropriations for this sub-head should be increased adequately.

Sub-head 90 - Hire of cars

Estimate for 1978 - 15 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 15 000 F

Hire of cars for the Assembly.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1978 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1977.

Sub-head 91 - Representational travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1978 - 114 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 104 000 F

Increase - 10 000 F

These are representational, travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by the President of the Assembly in the performance of his duties :

a. Fixed representation allowance ;

b. Travel and subsistence.

Comments

In view of the geographical extension of the area covered by the Council of Europe, resulting in a greater number of journeys to the outlying countries, and in the light of the increase in travel costs, which exceeds the average inflation rate, the Assembly asks for this appropriation to be increased by 10 000 F.

Sub-head 92 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1978 - 66 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 66 000 F

Estimate to cover :

a. official travel by Private Office staff ;

b. remuneration of a shorthand-typist for the President and other secretarial expenses ;

c. sundry secretarial expenses.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1978 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1977.

Sub-head 93 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly

Estimate for 1978 - 150 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 (representational expenditure) - 141 000 F

(145 000 F for the political groups)

Increase - 9 000 F

The allocation to the political groups having been transferred to Sub-head 88 bis, this estimate can be broken down as follows :

a. entertainment and similar expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and committee Chairmen and Rapporteurs - 40 000 F

b. travelling expenses and subsistence allowances of members of the Assembly attending meetings of certain Council of Europe bodies (other than sessions of the Assembly and meetings of Assembly committees) on the Council's behalf, or travelling on Assembly business - 105 000 F

c. accident insurance premium for members of the Assembly travelling officially at the Council's expense - 5 000 F

Comments

Leaving aside the transfer to Sub-head 88 bis of the fixed allocation to the political groups, the Assembly requests that this appropriation be increased by 9 000 F because of the increasing number of official journeys which parliamentarians have to make on behalf of the Council of Europe, notably to outlying countries, particularly since national parliaments no longer bear costs of this type as they did in the past.

Sub-head 94 - Official journeys

Estimate for 1978 - 336 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 306 000 F

Increase - 30 000 F

Comments

The increase in the number of journeys to outlying countries and the higher exchange rate of foreign currencies in relation to the French franc has meant that the appropriation under this sub-head is distinctly inadequate and an increase unavoidable. The Assembly asks for this appropriation to be increased in real terms by 30 000 F for 1978.

Sub-head 95 - Consultation of experts

Estimate for 1978 - 407 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 370 000 F

Increase - 37 000 F

This is to cover fees, travelling expenses, subsistence allowances and administrative assistance for experts, including those from non-member states, asked to carry out technical work or called in for consultation by Assembly bodies, either individually or in working parties. It is also intended to finance the scientific cooperation programme launched by the Assembly at the instigation of its Committee on Science and Technology.

Comments

28. The Assembly deeply regrets that, when approving the 1977 budget, the Committee of Ministers failed to adjust this appropriation upwards, and so reduced it in real terms by 10 % in relation to 1976. It recalls that in 1975 an increase of 100 000 F in this appropriation was requested and refused. The Assembly is of the opinion that any reduction in the appropriations under this sub-head would seriously affect the quality of its reports, particularly from the technical point of view, and therefore requests that the appropriation for 1978 be increased in real terms by 10 % in relation to that for 1977 in order to make up the leeway.

29. In its reply to Opinion No. 75 (Doc. 3965), the Committee of Ministers admitted that the refusal to adjust this appropriation resulted in an “effective decrease in real terms”, and stated that this decrease reflected "the reservations which the Committee of Ministers continues to have, and of which the Assembly is already aware, about this field of activity (scientific co-operation)".

30. The Assembly has indeed every reason to be surprised at this reduction in appropriations imposed on it by the Committee of Ministers in this field. After the thorough discussion of this subject in the Joint Committee in Paris (March 1976) and Vienna (July 1976), it had the impression that a consensus had been achieved regarding the continuation of these activities under its aegis.

Sub-head 96 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Estimate for 1978 - 198 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 198 000 F

This is to cover the organisation of conferences, colloquies, symposia or seminars, including the travelling and subsistence expenses of those taking part, as well as publishing, translation and printing costs (in non-official languages also), and the entertainment and other expenses incidental to those meetings.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1978 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1977.

Sub-head 97 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote

Estimate for 1978 - 36 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 36 000 F

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1978 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1977.

Sub-head 98 - Exceptional expenditure

Estimate for 1978 - Nil

Appropriation in 1977 - 20 000 F

Reduction - 20 000 F

Comments

The appropriation of 20 000 F in 1977 was intended for entertainment costs at the inauguration of the new building. No appropriation is requested in 1978.

Sub-head 99 - Europe Prize

Estimate for 1978 - 24 000 F

Appropriation in 1977 - 24 000 F

— Europe Prize - 20 000 F

— Expenses connected with presentation of the Prize - 4 000 F

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1978 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1977.

Sub-head 99 bis - Council of Europe Museum Prize

Estimate for 1978 - 14 000 F

Appropriation for 1977

Comments

The Assembly has recommended the institution of this Prize in order to give practical support and encouragement to smaller museums and art galleries throughout Europe. The Prize of 10 000 F should be awarded in Strasbourg and be presented locally each year by the Parliamentary Assembly as is already the case for the Europe Prize and flags of honour awarded to European municipalities. A further 4 000 F has therefore been estimated to cover the costs of presentation.

Sub-head 99 ter - Fixed contribution towards the cost of using a computer

Token entry

The Assembly is of the opinion that the time has come to enquire into the cost of using a computer, as is the practice in a number of national parliaments and other international organisations. The Assembly parliamentarians have frequently expressed their interest in such facilities, but would prefer the problem to be solved by the Council of Europe Secretariat. If that were done, the Assembly proposed that it should be associated in the form of a fixed contribution.