Opinion 88 (1978)[1]

Programme-budget for the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1979

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the texts relating to the powers of the Assembly in budgetary matters (1953-76) ;

2. Having taken note of the reply by the Committee of Ministers to its Opinions Nos. 82 (1977) and 85 (1977), on its operational expenditure (Doc. 4087, addendum),

3. Appreciates the efforts made by the Committee of Ministers to increase the special secretariat expenses for the political groups, although only 50% of the requested increase was granted, and reiterates the need for a further positive development of this sub-head which it considers essential for political work at European level ;

4. Welcomes the decision taken by the Committee of Ministers by which the latter approved a total appropriation for the Assembly's 1978 budgetary package, leaving it to the Assembly itself to allocate the appropriation to the various subheads ;

5. Expresses its satisfaction at the creation of a new A2/A3 post and on the upgrading of the A5 post to A6 in the Office of the Clerk ;

6. Notes the favourable opinion expressed by the Committee of Ministers on the Council of Europe Museum Award created by the Assembly in Recommendation 806 (1977), but regrets that the Committee of Ministers has not been able to allocate for this purpose a supplementary allocation in the budgetary package, thus leaving it to the Assembly to reduce accordingly appropriations of other sub-heads ;

7. Considering that a fourth part-session might have to be introduced as early as 1978 in order to deal in a satisfactory way with the increased amount of business tabled by the now enlarged Assembly.

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

1. See Doc. 4153, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 7 July 1978.

Appendix 1

A. Summary table of requested increases in real terms for 1979, compared with initial appropriations for 1978

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1978[2]	Increases in real terms proposed for 1979
HEAD XX - Staff	F	F
Sub-heads		
Clerk of the Assembly		
82 - Salary, allowances and social charges	357 100	
Staff in the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly		
83 -Remuneration - permanent staff	6 501 000	
83 bis - bis - Assembly staffing changes		180 000
84 -Expenses on arrival and departure, home leave	78 000	
85 - Overtime and allowances for exceptional duties	35 000	
86 -Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis	p.m.	
87 - Remuneration and accessory charges for temporary conference staff	4 040 000	10 000
88 - Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration	750 000	
	_	_
TOTAL HEAD XX	11 761 000	190 000
HEAD XXI - Special Secretariat expenses		
89 - Allocated to political groups__	220 000	380 000
TOTAL HEAD XXI	220 000	380 000
HEAD XXII - Supplies, services and other operational expenditure (Budgetary package)	F	F
Sub-heads		
90 - Publishing and printing	659 000	80 000
91 - Hire of cars	16 000	
92 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly	114 000	16 000
93 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	71 000	
94 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly	152 000	8 000
95 -Official journeys	342 000	13 000
96 - Consultation of experts	400 000	
97 - Organisation of ad hoc conferenc	218 000	
98 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this Vote	38 000	
99 - Europe Prize	26 000	5 000
99 bis - Council of Europe Museum Prize Award	14 000	
99 ter - Environment Prize	p.m.	99
99 quater - Fixed contribution towards the use of a computer	p.m.	
	_	_
TOTAL HEAD XXII	2 050 000	122 000

2. Appropriation adjustments will doubtless be necessary after the adjustment to be made to staff salary scales in 1978. The amount of these adjustments cannot yet be determined, but it will be covered in principle by the provision entered under Sub-head 88

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1978[2]	Increases in real terms proposed for 1979
	_	_
TOTAL VOTE III	14 031 000	692 000

B. Detailed explanations of the increases in real terms requested

Introduction

1. As already explained in earlier opinions, the changes requested for 1979 are to be regarded as increases in real terms over the appropriations made to the Assembly for 1978.

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 1978 as a result of pay scale changes and their consequences for 1979 and also the provision to be made for pay adjustments in 1979.

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 1979 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 1979 will thus be determined by the total 1978 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 (78) 25 of 17 March 1978.

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 :

2. Appropriation adjustments will doubtless be necessary after the adjustment to be made to staff salary scales in 1978. The amount of these adjustments cannot yet be determined, but it will be covered in principle by the provision entered under Sub-head 88

Appendix 2

Posts	Secretariat of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Private Office of the President	Div. I	Div. II	Div. III	Table Office	Total
A7	1					1
A6		1				1
A5		1	1	1	1	3
A4	1	2	3	1		7
A2/A3		4	4	4		12
B5	1				1	2
B4	1				1	2
B3	2	5	4	3	1	15
B2				2		2
Total	6	12	12	11	4	45

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

Appendix 3

Nature of change		Assignment
New posts	1 B3	Secretariat of committees
	1 B4	Scientific co-operation
Upgradings (token entry)	2 B2 to B3	Bilingual assistants

Comments

1. Following a recommendation made by the Management Survey Team in 1972, the Assembly proposed in 1974 a reorganisation of its administrative departments which included the upgrading of a B3 post to B4. This upgrading was again requested in 1975 and mentioned for reasons of budgetary economy as token entry only in the Assembly's opinion on the 1977 and 1978 budgets.

2. As early as 1973 the Assembly also requested a new A2/A3 and a B3 post for scientific co-operation. The Secretary General had undertaken at that time to meet this request by transfer within the Secretariat but was until today only in the position to do so for the A2/A3. The request for the B3 post which was repeated for several years only for the record has now become a matter of urgent importance to the Assembly.

3. Although the workload had to be taken over by the existing staff, the situation can no longer continue and the request becomes extremely urgent since the activities in the framework of the scientific co-operation have increased considerably over the years and supplementary A grade staff create additional clerical work. The tasks performed by the secretariat of the scientific cooperation have also developed and are no longer just those of a B3 bilingual shorthand-typist, but much more those of an administrative assistant of grade B4 or B5 to the scientific counsellor.

4. Under these circumstances and for reasons of economy, the Assembly proposes to create for 1979 one B4 post, thus replacing its previous requests for the creation of a B3 and the upgrading of a B3 to a B4.

5. Furthermore, the Assembly requested in its opinion on the 1978 budget and in the light of the readmission of Greece, the accession of Portugal and Spain, the creation of an A2/A3 post of committee secretary and of a B3 post of bilingual assistant. However, only the A2/A3 post has been created and the B3 post is still needed. The Assembly therefore repeats its request to create for 1979 a B3 post of bilingual assistant.

6. The Assembly also wishes to put on record that two B2 posts still need to be upgraded to B3 and refers in this context to the arguments set out in its Opinions Nos. 62 (1973) and 70 (1975). With a view to economy, these requests are 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 1979 appropriation be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978

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 Assembly requests that the 1979 appropriation be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978.

Sub-head 86 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis

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 1979 at the time of drafting this opinion.

Comments

The increasing costs for interpretation due to longer and more frequent meetings require an increase of this sub-head to 10 000 F.

As customary, the Assembly reserves itself the right to submit a supplementary estimate if it should decide to alter its time-table for 1979, e.g. by holding four part-sessions instead of three within the statutory one-month limit. It must be stressed that this likelihood has become very realistic and the introduction of a fourth part-session as from 1978 is being considered.

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

The increasing costs for interpretation due to longer and more frequent meetings require an increase of this sub-head to 10 000 F.

As customary, the Assembly reserves itself the right to submit a supplementary estimate if it should decide to alter its time-table for 1979, e.g. by holding four part-sessions instead of three within the statutory one-month limit. It must be stressed that this likelihood has become very realistic and the introduction of a fourth part-session as from 1978 is being considered.

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

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).

Sub-head 89 - Allocation to political groups

Appendix 4

Estimate for 1979	600 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	220 000 F
Increase	380 000 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

1. Although the Assembly appreciates the fact that the Committee of Ministers was able to grant about half of the increase requested by the Assembly in respect of allocations to political groups, it recalls that it attaches considerable importance to the further strengthening of its groups as essential for political work at European level.

2. The accession of the two new member states has considerably increased the numbers of non-Community states, making it even more important for the Assembly's political groups to be independent of their counterparts in the European Parliament.

3. Furthermore, the creation of a sixth political group reduces consequently the share of the other five, since at the end of each year the remainder was allocated to the existing groups.

4. It has always been stressed that the financial resources of political groups are essential for the efficient operation of the Parliamentary Assembly. Without a considerable increase for such appropriations, the important role and function of the political parties within the Parliamentary Assembly cannot be fulfilled, a point which, amongst others, was strongly emphasised at the recent colloquy of the Assembly on the role of political parties in Europe. The appropriation for 1979 must therefore be considerably increased in order to promote the Parliamentary Assembly to the political forum we all wish it to be.

5. Experience has shown that political groups within the Assembly facilitate the expression of the leading opinions, and it is legitimate to give them the financial means to prepare them, although without installing any sort of political bureaucracy.

6. With a view to the direct elections to the European Parliament, it is indispensable to stress that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe must play an important role in the European opinion-making process. Appropriate financial means are therefore necessary to obtain the best audience, by organising not only fruitful debates during Assembly sessions, but also in between sessions, and thereby to attract more attention to the political aspects of the "Europe of the Twenty".

7. As pointed out in Opinion No. 82 (1977), the appropriations are intended in the first place to give more secretarial assistance to the political groups, but also to cover the cost of seminars or study visits to be organised in relation to the work of the Council of Europe. In the case of secretarial assistance, the appropriations would have to be increased in such a way as to enable the political groups to employ two persons at least part-time and for a certain time of the year, besides other incidental expenditure.

8. The Assembly therefore requests that the fixed allocation be increased to 600 000 F in real terms in the 1979 budget, which might be apportioned as follows :

– a fixed grant for secretarial assistance for 30 days a year (during sessions) at 300 F per day for each of the six existing groups, i.e. 9 000 × 6 = - 54 000 F

– a fixed grant for secretarial assistance of 180 half days (10 months) a year at 150 F per half day for each of the six existing groups, i.e. 27 000 × 6 = - 162 000 F

– an additional per capita allocation of 1 000 F to be multiplied by the total number of members of the groups, i.e. 1 000 ×336 = - 336 000 F

– the remaining amount for miscellaneous expenses incurred by all groups, which balance should be shared among them at the end of the year - 48 000 F

– 600 000 F

9. Rules for the spending and auditing of this sum, which is now entered outside the Assembly's budgetary package, are being drafted by the political groups and the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme. The conclusions will be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers after approval by the Assembly

Appendix 5

Budgetary package

Head XXII - Supplies and services and other operational expenditure Sub-head 90 - Publishing and printing

Sub-head 90 - Publishing and printing

Estimate for 1979	739 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	659 000 F
Increase	80 000 F

This covers publishing and printing costs relating to :

official Assembly documents, i.e. :

1 200 bilingual copies of the Working Papers for sittings (2 800 - 3 000 pages) ;

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

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

Comments

The further 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. The accession of the two new member states contributes largely to the shortage in this appropriation. The initiative taken by the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations to improve the follow-up of texts adopted by the Assembly also asks for further resources. Since this is institutional expenditure that cannot be cut, the Assembly requests an increase of 80 000 F.

Sub-head 91 - Hire of cars

Appendix 6

Estimate for 1979	16 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	16 000 F

Hire of cars for the Assembly

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1979 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978.

Sub-head 92 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Appendix 7

Estimate for 1979	130 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	114 000 F
Increase	16 000 F

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

1. fixed representation allowance ;

2. travel and subsistence ;

Comments

As already set out in Opinion No. 82 (1977), the geographical extension of the Council of Europe asks for a greater number of journeys to the outlying countries. It is therefore indispensable to allocate to the President increased funds to let him exercise his duties of contacting national parliaments and governments. The Assembly asks to increase this sub-head by 16 000 F.

Sub-head 93 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

Appendix 8

Estimate for 1979	71 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	71 000 F

Estimate to cover :

official travel by Private Office staff ;

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

special duties allowance ;

i sundry secretarial expenses.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1979 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978

Sub-head 94 - Representation expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly

Appendix 9

Estimate for 1979	160 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	152 000 F
Increase	8 000 F

This sub-head covers :

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

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 ;

accident insurance premium for members of the Assembly travelling officially at the Council's expense.

Comments

The accession of the two new member states increases automatically the travelling expenses incurred by the members of the Assembly, since more members are travelling more often to more distant places. The Assembly requests to increase this sub-head by 8 000 F.

Sub-head 95 - Official journeys

Appendix 10

Estimate for 1979	355 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	342 000 F
Increase	13 000 F

Official travel by the staff of the Office of the Clerk and other Secretariat staff required to attend meetings of Assembly bodies or accompanying the President or members of the Assembly on special official journeys.

Comments

The geographical widening of the Council of Europe makes it necessary to have more journeys to outlying countries and the increasing exchange rate of foreign currencies in relation to the French franc make the appropriation under this sub-head distinctly inadequate. The Assembly asks for this appropriation to be increased in real terms by 13 000 F for 1979.

Sub-head 96 - Consultation of experts

Appendix 11

Estimate for 1979	400 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	400 000 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 the Committee on Science and Technology.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriations for 1979 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978.

Sub-head 97 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Appendix 12

Estimate for 1979	218 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	218 000 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 1979 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978

Sub-head 98 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this Vote

Appendix 13

Estimate for 1979	38 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	38 000 F

Reception service, medals, gratuities for special work, refreshments for night-shifts, etc.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1979 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978

Sub-head 99 - Europe Prize

Appendix 14

Estimate for 1979	31 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	26 000 F
Increase	5 000 F
Europe Prize	20 000 F
Expenses connected with presentation of the Prize including flags and poles	11 000 F

Comments

It has been difficult in the last years to cover the expenses involved in the presentation of the Europe Prize, particularly for the European flags and flagpoles which can no longer be borne by the Directorate of Press and Information of the Council of Europe. To meet this difficulty, the Assembly requests an increase of 5 000 F for this sub-head.

Sub-head 99 bis - Council of Europe Museum Award

Appendix 15

Estimate for 1979	14 000 F
Appropriation in 1978	14 000 F

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1979 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1978.

Sub-head 99 ter - Council of Europe Environment Prize

Token entry

The Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities is considering the creation of a Council of Europe Environment Prize to be awarded to an individual, an authority, or an association deemed to have rendered signal service to the protection of nature and the conservation of the environment. Once a final decision will be taken, the Assembly will make a detailed proposal for the amount to be included in this sub-head.

Sub-head 99 quart - 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 proposes that it should be associated in the form of a fixed contribution.