

Opinion 114 (1983)¹

Programme-budget for the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1984

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the texts relating to the powers of the Assembly in budgetary matters ;
2. Having taken note of the reply by the Committee of Ministers to its Opinions Nos. 109 (1982) and 110 (1982), on its operational expenditure and on the Council of Europe budgets,
3. Appreciates the financial effort undertaken by the Committee of Ministers to enable the Assembly to meet its additional expenditure for the 1983 Strasbourg Conference of Democratic Countries ;
4. Regrets that no positive response was given to its modest requests for staffing changes and reiterates the importance it attaches to them for the 1984 budget ;
5. Is of the opinion that the average increase requested for 1984 is extremely modest, thus fully subscribing to the financial constraints which member states have to face ;
6. Adopts, accordingly, the following opinion concerning the operational expenditure for 1984 (Vote III of the Council of Europe budget) :

A. Summary table of requested increases in real terms for 1984 compared with initial appropriations for 1983

voir tableau

1. See [Doc. 5087](#), report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme.



Appendix

VOTE III- Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1983	Increases in real terms proposed for 1984
HEAD XXIII - Staff	F	F
79 - Salary, allowances and social charges of the Clerk of the Assembly	596 000	
80 - Remuneration of permanent staff	11 881 500	
80 bis- Assembly staffing changes		(3 A 2/3 to /en A4)+46 500
81 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis	294 000	
82 - Expenses on arrival and departure, home leave	131 000	
83 - Overtime and allowances for exceptional duties	53 000	
84 - Remuneration and accessory charges for temporary conference staff	8 000 000	(1 stenographer, 1 s/h typist for sessions) (1 Sténographe, 1 Sténodactylographe pour les sessions) + 20 000 - 140 000 - 75 000
85 - Provision for cost of living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration	1 335 000	
TOTAL HEAD XXIII	22 290 500	- 148 500
HEAD XXIV - Special Secretariat expenses and other expenses		
86 - Special Secretariat expenses and other expenses	648 300	
TOTAL HEAD XXIV	648 300	

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1983	Increases in real terms proposed for 1984
HEAD XXV - Supplies, services and other operational expenditure (budgetary package)	F	F
Sub-heads / Articles		
87 - Publishing and printing	1 250 000	
88 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly	215 000	
89 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	125 00	
90 - Representational expenditure , other official expenditure and travelling expenses of the membres of the Assembly	250 000	
91 - Official journeys	620 000	+ 175 000
92- Consultation of experts	580 000	
93- Organisation of ad hoc conferences	350 000	
94 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote	75 000	
95 - Europe prizes	65 000	+ 20 000
TOTAL HEAD XXV	3 530 000	+ 195 000
2		

2. On which 75 000F will be transferred from sub-head 84 and reserved for interpreters travelling on official duties.

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1983	Increases in real terms proposed for 1984
TOTAL VOTE III	26 468 800	46 500
2		

B. Detailed explanations of the increases in real terms requested

Introduction

1. As already explained in earlier opinions, the changes requested for 1984 are to be regarded as increases in real terms over the appropriations made to the Assembly for 1983.
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 1983 as a result of pay scale changes and their consequences for 1984, as well as the provisions to be made for pay adjustments in 1984.
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 effects of inflation on the other 1984 estimates and adjust them accordingly.
5. The estimates entered here under Head XXV (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 1984 will thus be determined by the total 1983 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

Analysis of estimates according to budget classification

HEAD XXIII - Staff

Sub-head 79 - Salary, allowances and social charges 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 (83) 3 of 24 March 1983.

Sub-head 80 - 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).

The present numerical breakdown of staff, if subdivided according to Divisions, is as follows :

Posts	Secretariat of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Private Office of the President and secretariats	Div.I	Div.II	Div.III	Table Office	Total
A7	1					1
A6		1			1	2
A5			1	1		2
Total	8	10	11	12	5	46

2. On which 75 000F will be transferred from sub-head 84 and reserved for interpreters travelling on official duties.

Posts	Secretariat of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Private Office of the President and secretariats	Div.I	Div.II	Div.III	Table Office	Total
A4	2	2	3	1		8
A2/3		3	3	4	1	11
B5				1	2	
B4	1			1	3	
B3	3	4	4	3	1	15
B2				2		2
Total	8	10	11	12	5	46

Sub-head 80 bis - Staffing changes requested for the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly

	Nature of change	Assignment	Cost
Upgradings	3 A 2/3 to A4 Pro memoria: 2B2 to B3	Committee secretaries Bilingual assistants	F 15 500 *3 = 46 500
New post	1B3	Secretariat of committees	

Comments

8. As the Assembly has explained in all its recent opinions, its organigramme shows thirteen operative committees but only seven posts of A4 equivalent to a principal administrative officer (without counting the Head of the Private Office of the President of the Assembly). In order to place all Assembly committees on an equal footing another six A4 posts would seem indispensable. Furthermore, the Assembly is conscious of the fact that committee secretaries who do not have the grade of A4 are strongly disadvantaged by comparison with their colleagues in national parliaments, the European Parliament, the WEU, etc., where equivalent duties are often carried out by officials of a rank equivalent to A5, and sometimes higher. It is recalled that a committee secretary carries considerable responsibilities assigned to him by the rapporteurs and the committee chairmen and that he often has to face situations having important implications for the policy of the Assembly, without being able to hide behind his hierarchical superiors. There can thus be no real comparison with the situation existing in the intergovernmental sector of the Secretariat.

9. The Assembly insists on the urgency and importance it attaches to its demands correcting the present imbalance. Governments of member states should appreciate that the Assembly is fully aware of the economic and financial difficulties which they currently have to face and that by asking for three upgradings only, at almost negligible cost, it demonstrates its readiness to share in the general effort for economy.

10. The previous requests made in [Opinion No. 109 \(1982\)](#) for the creation of a supplementary post of B3 of bilingual assistant, as well as the request made since 1973 concerning the upgrading of two B2 posts to B3, are mentioned here pro memoria only.

11. For 1985 the needs for the Assembly will however change and supplementary posts will become necessary. Apart from the above-mentioned requests, which the Assembly will reconsider in due course, the creation of a new post of a senior B grade will become essential for the management of the Europe Prize and Council of Europe flags of honour. This sector, which contributes greatly to the public relations of the Council of Europe as a whole, has become a victim of its success and appropriations for temporary staff have to be used to cope with the steadily increasing amount of work. But for the time being, the Assembly is merely indicating that the situation should be consolidated in 1985 and will return to this matter in its next opinion on the Assembly budget.

Sub-head 81 - Staff recruited to fill vacant posts on a temporary basis

This covers remuneration and other charges concerning staff recruited temporarily to the Office of the Clerk to fill permanent posts which for various reasons such as extended sick leave cannot be occupied by permanent staff.

Sub-head 82 - 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 1984 appropriation be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1983.

Sub-head 83 - 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 up-graded 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. cost of interviewing candidates for posts.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the 1984 appropriations be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1983.

Sub-head 84 - 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 the sessions and meetings of the Assembly and its committees scheduled in the programme for 1984 at the time of drafting this opinion.

Comments

In its [Opinion No. 109 \(1982\)](#) the Assembly asked the Committee of Ministers to increase this sub-head by 570 000 F in real terms to cover the supplementary expenditure which would be incurred by the organisation of the Strasbourg Conference and the improved social insurance cover for temporary staff. This figure was brought down by reducing the needs for the Strasbourg Conference, the provision for social insurance and the effects for the full year 1983 of the salary adjustments, bringing the total appropriation to 8 000 000 F. The share of the Strasbourg Conference being evaluated at 140 000 F and since a second Strasbourg Conference is not scheduled for 1984, the Assembly is prepared to accept a decrease in this sub-head equivalent to the increase obtained in 1983.

However, the steady increase in the use of the French language in the Assembly since the accession of Portugal and Spain requires an increase in the number of the French stenographers from 8 to 9 and the number of shorthand-typists from 5 to 6.

Furthermore, the Assembly proposes a transfer of 75 000 F to sub-head 91 (official journeys) for which the explanation is given under that sub-head.

Sub-head 85 - 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.

HEAD XXIV - Special secretariat expenses and other expenses

Sub-head 86 - Special secretariat expenses and other expenses

Appropriation in 1983 :- 648 300 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 Secretariat assistance, documentation and travel" (Resolution (58) 4 of the Committee of Ministers of 27 March 1958). The appropriation is allocated to the political groups of the Assembly according to a key of apportionment decided upon by the Bureau of the Assembly.

Comments

In view of the general economic situation in member states the Assembly proposes maintaining the 1984 appropriation at the same level as for 1983 in real terms.

Budgetary package

HEAD XXV - Supplies and services and other operational expenditure

Sub-head 87 - Publishing and printing

Appropriation in 1983 :- 1 250 000 F

This covers publishing and printing costs relating to :

official Assembly documents, that is :

1 200 bilingual copies of the Documents de séance (working papers) (2 000-3 000 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 Assembly requests that this appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 88 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Appropriation in 1983 :- 215 000 F

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

- a. fixed representational allowance ;
- b. travel and subsistence.

Comments

The Assembly requests that this appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 89 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

Appropriation in 1983 :- 125 000 F

Estimate to cover :

1. official travel by Private Office staff or staff travelling on the President's request or for his needs ;
2. remuneration of a shorthand-typist for the President and other secretarial expenses ;
3. special duties allowances ;

4. sundry secretarial expenses.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 90 - Representation expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly

Appropriation in 1983 :- 250 000 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 the 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 Assembly requests that the appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 91 - Official Journeys

Estimate for 1984 :- 795 000 F

Appropriation in 1983 :- 620 000 F

Increase :- 175 000 F

Official travel by staff of the Office of the Clerk and other Secretariat staff required to attend meetings of Assembly bodies and other organisations.

Comments

There is no doubt that the increase in travel costs all over Europe is considerably higher than the standard inflation rate in member countries and in France. The devaluations of the French franc in 1982 and 1983 also contribute to the fact that the appropriation available for official travelling expenses of the staff of the Office of the Clerk to service committee meetings, to accompany members of the Assembly or to attend meetings of other organisations has become largely insufficient. This has led the Clerk to apply a very restrictive policy to missions by Assembly staff, which inevitably curtails the assistance given to Assembly committees meeting in Paris and elsewhere. The Assembly therefore asks that this sub-head be increased by 100 000 F.

The sub-head should be further increased by 75 000 F by a transfer from Sub-head 84 (remuneration and accessory charges in respect of temporary staff) in order to enable the Office of the Clerk to make more frequent use of interpreters on the permanent staff of the Council of Europe secretariat rather than use almost exclusively temporary interpreters. It must be recalled that expenses incurred by temporary or by free-lance interpreters are charged to Sub-head 84 and represent almost fifty percent of the appropriation. Staff interpreters are however travelling on Sub-head 91, thus reducing the possibilities for movement by staff directly servicing the Assembly. There is no doubt that an appreciable economy could be made for the Assembly budget if at least one member of the interpreter team could more often be a staff member who would not have to be paid special allowances and would be travelling using the same economic criteria as the other members of the Office of the Clerk. The Assembly therefore requests the above-mentioned transfer, on the understanding that this sum will be exclusively used for interpretation and not for other members of the staff.

Sub-head 92 - Consultation of experts

Appropriation in 1983 :- 580 000 F

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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 this appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 93 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Appropriation in 1983 :- 350 000 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 this appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 94 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote

Appropriation in 1983 :- 75 000 F

Refreshments for staff on night duty, hire of cars, gratuities for special work, medals, flags and poles, etc.

Comments

The Assembly requests that this appropriation be maintained for 1984 at the same level in real terms.

Sub-head 95 - Europe Prizes

Estimate for 1984 :- 85 000 F

Appropriation in 1983 :- 65 000 F

Increase :- 20 000 F

- a. Europe Prize
- b. Council of Europe Museum Prize
- c. Expenses connected with the presentation of the prizes, including travelling expenses, dinners, receptions, flowers, diplomas, insurance, etc.

Comments

The Assembly entirely shares the views already expressed by the Committee on Culture and Education in 1982, as well as the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities, in favour of increasing the two Europe Prizes, which have remained at the same level for many years. It is felt that this modest increase, which still keeps the prizes at a symbolic value, would enhance their credibility and standing with the European public.