

Opinion 135 (1987)¹

Programme-budget for the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1988

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the texts concerning the Assembly's role in budgetary matters²
2. Having taken note of the decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers on the programme-budget for the Assembly's operational expenditure in 1987;
3. Pointing out that in recent years it has not been possible, for want of resources, to act on a certain number of Assembly recommendations calling for stronger co-operation among the Twenty-one or for practical measures of benefit to European citizens;
4. Welcoming the fact that a three-year computerisation plan (1987-89) is being drawn up, and wishing to stress in this context that the Assembly is still underequipped where computerisation and office automation are concerned;
5. Stressing the need to ensure that the increases which must, inevitably, be made in the budgets of the European Court and Commission of Human Rights do not prevent the development of other important Council of Europe activities, and drawing attention to the justification for an increase in the appropriations made to the Assembly in its capacity as a statutory body,
6. Adopts the following opinion concerning its operational expenditure for 1988 (Vote III of the Council of Europe ordinary budget), which is in two parts:
 - a table of requested changes in 1988 in comparison with the appropriations for 1987;
 - detailed explanations of the requests for such changes.

A. Summary table of requested increases in real terms for 1988 compared with initial appropriations for 1987

See table to appendix

B. Detailed explanations of the requested changes in real terms

Foreword

7. Under Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers on the budgetary system of the Assembly, the Assembly expresses an opinion item by item on its operational appropriations, that is, Vote III of the Council of Europe ordinary budget. Estimates of Assembly expenditure covered by resources common to all departments are contained in Vote I - Common expenditure.

1. Assembly debate on 5 May 1987 (3rd Sitting) (see [Doe. 5722](#) Doe. 5722, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 May 1987 (3rd Sitting).
2. See Rules of Procedure of the Assembly (1986), pp. 82 to 85, and Texts on Budgetary and Financial Matters (1985), pp. 95 to 129.



8. The Assembly's proposals as expressed in this opinion are incorporated in the Secretary General's draft budget. If the Secretary General is unable to endorse one of the proposals, he informs the Committee of Ministers, giving reasons, after consulting the President of the Assembly.

9. The Assembly budget consists of three separate sets of appropriations: firstly, appropriations for staff, secondly, grants to the political groups and thirdly, all other operational expenditure of the Assembly. In 1975, the Committee of Ministers agreed that the third set of appropriations should be voted on as a single appropriation and that the Secretary General could subsequently change the amount of any item in the package at the Assembly's request, subject to Article 31 of the Financial Regulations.

10. With the exception of the Strasbourg Conference, which will not take place in 1988, the 1988 programme of the Assembly and its organs is much the same as the 1987 programme:

- three plenary part-sessions totalling nineteen days, attended by 170 Representatives and as many Substitutes ;
- meetings of the Bureau and the Standing Committee between Assembly sessions;
- the usual four-day summer meeting of the Standing Committee, held in conjunction with meetings of several committees ;
- meetings of one day or more in Strasbourg or Paris, outside the three plenary Assembly sessions, of each of the thirteen general committees and of their subcommittees and specialist working parties;
- an annual meeting of one or more days of each of the thirteen general committees and of one of the subcommittees of each general committee elsewhere than in Strasbourg or Paris (rule adopted by the Standing Committee on 12 December 1963), and attendance at conferences or hearings held by a Council of Europe body other than the sub-committee or committee in question;
- meetings of the Steering Committee of the Strasbourg Conference and the European Parliamentary and Scientific Contact Group (of the Committee on Science and Technology);
- ad hoc conferences and parliamentary hearings organised by the Assembly.

11. The Assembly's budget priorities for 1988 are:

- modernisation of the equipment in the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly ;
- staffing adjustments considered necessary to the proper functioning of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly.

12. As in the past, the Assembly's opinion merely gives the adjustments in real terms and leaves it to the Secretariat to assess, in the same way as for other appropriations in the next Council of Europe ordinary budget, estimates for the remuneration of permanent and temporary staff and adjustments for inflation.

Analysis of estimates according to budget classification

HEAD XV - Staff

Sub-head 66 - Salary, allowances and social charges of the Clerk of the Assembly

A higher appropriation is needed than in 1987 because the effect, over a full year, of the salary adjustment in 1987.

Sub-head 67 - Remuneration of permanent staff

This appropriation, which covers basic salaries, noncutting and regular allowances and social insurance, will be based on the approved 1987 establishment of the Clerk's Office (46 posts - see table below).

At 1 April 1987, staff numbers in the Clerk's Office, division and not including vacant posts, were:

Increases will be needed on account of:

- length of service increments and changes in the actual situation of members of staff;
- the effect over a full year in 1988 of salary adjustments in 1987.

Sub-head 67 bis - Assembly staffing changes

Estimate for 1988: 402 500 F

Creation of an A4 post 392 500 F

Upgrading:

- 1 B3 to B4 10 000F

Comments

i. Creation of an A4 post

In its [Opinion No. 129 \(1986\)](#), the Assembly requested the creation of an A4 post, mainly for the purposes of the Strasbourg Conference: preparations for the 2nd Conference and for conferences in future years. The Committee of Ministers did not comply with this request. The Assembly considers that its parliamentary democracy activities are ongoing ones and has therefore repeated its request for the creation of an A4 post. Detailed explanations of the need for such a post are given in [Opinion No. 129 \(1986\)](#) as follows:

"Thorough preparations for the 2nd Conference and planned development of this activity in the years ahead will require the full-time attention of a highly capable official. An A4 post is warranted by the duties the official will have, which will include servicing the Steering Committee and Contact Group of the Strasbourg Conference. Preparations for meetings will require a great deal of consultation, and occasional negotiation with the European Parliament and parliaments and embassies of non-member states involved in the conference.

Although the work generated by the Strasbourg Conference in itself fully justifies creating an A4 post, this slight increase in staff can be expected to help the Assembly cope better with exceptional work such as servicing the Colombo Commission in 1985 and 1986 and, in 1988, cooperating with other Secretariat departments on the European Public Campaign on North-South Interdependence and Solidarity.

ii. Upgrading of a B3 post to B4

In its [Opinion No. 129 \(1986\)](#), the Assembly also requested that a B3 post be upgraded to B4, stressing that central functions in the Clerk's Office now involved much more, and much more demanding, work. Since the Secretary General has transferred a grade B4 from the Paris Office to the Clerk's Office, it is not necessary to reiterate this request.

In the Secretariat organisation chart, the Private Office of the President of the Assembly has a grade B3 secretarial post. In fact, the secretary in question works not only for the Private Office but also for the President of the Assembly himself. The duties of the President have increased considerably since 1983, with the result, inter alia, that the President is in Strasbourg more often and the secretary therefore has more work and increased responsibility.

The President of the Assembly has requested that his secretary be upgraded to B4 on account of the responsibility carried by the post and the qualifications required for it. The Assembly endorses this request. In particular, it considers that the post is equivalent to those of the secretaries of the specially appointed officials, which are classified as B4.

Sub-head 68 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis

Sub-head 69 - Expenses on arrival and departure, home leave

Sub-head 70 - Overtime and allowances to permanent staff for exceptional duties

Comments

The Assembly suggests that the 1988 appropriations for Sub-heads 68, 69 and 70 be kept the same in real terms as for 1987.

Sub-head 71 - Remuneration and accessory charges for temporary conference staff

Appropriation in 1987: 9 956 000 F

This covers remuneration, social charges, travelling expenses and compensation for travelling time for:

- temporary staff employed during sessions (parliamentary secretaries; stenographers; ushers and messengers; interpreters; translators and revisers secretaries; offset assistants; stitchers and binders; doctor nurse; other (radio technicians, switchboard -operators, drivers, post office staff, police, firemen, etc.));

- temporary staff employed between sessions (interpreters for meetings, conferences and hearings of committees and sub-committees, temporary assistants, etc.).

This sub-head also covers the cost of translation and interpretation in additional unofficial languages in connection with the Assembly's external relations, subject to the conditions and financial restrictions approved by the Committee of Ministers.

Comments

This appropriation needs to be increased because of the effect over a full year in 1988 as a whole of the 1987 salary adjustment.

At its meeting on 7 January 1987, the Bureau of the Assembly took various steps to cut the cost of interpretation for committee meetings and thus avoid overstepping the appropriation under Sub-head 71 by as much as in 1986.

Sub-head 72 - Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration

This covers the 1988 increases in the salaries of the staff of the Clerk's Office.

HEAD XVI - Special secretariat expenses and other expenses

Sub-head 73 - Special secretariat expenses and other expenses

Increase in 1988: 200 000 F

(First instalment of a total increase of 500 000 F to be achieved by 1990)

(Appropriation in 1987: 1 030 000 F)

This sum is to be apportioned among the Assembly's political groups in accordance with a scheme decided on by the Bureau of the Assembly.

Comments

The Committee of Ministers granted an increase in the appropriations of the political groups in the 1987 budget. But the resources thus made available to groups are still not at a level to permit the group with the smallest number of members to employ at least a full-time grade B2 secretary. Currently, the annual salary of a temporary locally recruited secretary of this grade amounts to 137 000 F. The allocation for the smallest Assembly group would need to be increased by 100 000 F. Obviously, the allocations made to the other four groups of the Assembly would have to be increased by the same amount.

The groups cannot operate properly without a minimum staff. Those receiving the highest annual allocations already employ in Strasbourg a part-time official ranking higher than grade B2. They could make use of the proposed increase of 100 000 F to progressively offer their staff full-time contracts. To ensure sound financial management, the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme and the Bureau of the Assembly would make the requested additional appropriations available to groups on justification.

In order to limit the annual growth rate of its appropriations, the Assembly proposes that the increase of 500 000 F under Sub-head 73 should be spread over the budgets for the next three years. The first instalment, to be included in the 1988 budget, would amount to 200 000 F.

HEAD XVII - Supplies, services and other operational expenditure (budgetary package)

Sub-head 74 - Publishing and printing

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 1 500 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 1 338 000 F)

This sub-head covers publishing and printing costs relating to :

official Assembly documents, namely:

- 1 200 copies in each official language of the Working Papers (2 800 to 3 000 pages) ;
- 900 copies in each official language of the Official Report of Debates (1 200 to 1 400 pages);

distribution of reports and documents adopted by the Assembly and its committees and translation of certain texts adopted (for circulation by national parliaments);

other documents of the Assembly and its committees.

Comments

The Assembly requests the same level of provision in 1988 as in 1987.

Sub-head 75 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 272 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 248 000 F)

This sub-head covers the representational, travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by the President of the Assembly in the performance of his duties:

- a. fixed representational allowance in 1987: 157 000 F
- b. travelling and subsistence expenses in 1987: 115 000 F

Comments

The Assembly requests the same appropriation in 1988 as in 1987.

Sub-head 76 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

Indicative appropriation in 1987: 149 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 124 000 F)

This sub-head covers:

1. official travel by Private Office staff or staff travelling at the President's request or on presidential business;
2. remuneration of one shorthand-typist for the President and other secretarial expenses;
3. special duty allowances of Private Office staff;
4. sundry secretarial expenses.

Comments

The Assembly requests the same appropriation for 1988 as for 1987.

Sub-head 77 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly

Indicative estimate for 1988 : 413 000 F

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 393 000 F

Increase: 20 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 411 000 F)

This sub-head covers'

- entertainment and similar expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, committee chairmen and rapporteurs (about 104 000 F in 1986);
- 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 at a committee's request;

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

Comments

The expenses of members travelling on official business fall into two categories:

- expenses pertaining to official journeys in general;
- members' travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by the award of the flags of honour.

No additional funds are needed for the second category in 1988, since the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities is not intending to increase the number of flags of honour awarded each year (fifty in 1986). Nevertheless, in [Resolution 862 \(1986\)](#) on "Thirty years of the Europe Prize", the Assembly recommended several measures which have financial implications and which are currently being considered by the above-mentioned committee.

Since 1984, the Standing Committee has taken steps to restrict the expenses of members travelling officially for the Assembly (see, in particular, [Doc. 5468](#), Section VI). Despite this restrictive policy, expenditure under Subhead 77 again exceeded the indicative appropriation in 1986. This is due partly to the fact that the Assembly is taking its external relations a stage further and strengthening co-operation with intergovernmental bodies (thus, since February 1987, it is represented on the Steering Committee on the Mass Media), and partly to the fact that national parliaments are less prepared to pay the expenses of members travelling on official Assembly business.

In order to bring the appropriation under Sub-head 77 into line with actual expenditure, the Assembly suggests increasing it by 20 000 F in real terms. This would also cover the expenses in respect of the Assembly's representation on the recently appointed Bureau and Organising Committee for European Cinema and Television Year (1988). It is particularly important that the Assembly should be involved in this Year along with the European Parliament, as in the case of European Music Year (1985).

Sub-head 78 - Official journeys

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 822 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 794 000 F)

This sub-head covers official travel by staff of the Clerk's Office and other Secretariat staff required to attend meetings of Assembly bodies and other organisations as well as other journeys by staff travelling officially at the Clerk's request.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for Sub-head 78 in 1988 be kept at the same level in real terms as in 1987.

In its [Opinion No. 114 \(1983\)](#), the Assembly suggested using, where economically justifiable, interpreters on the permanent staff of the Secretariat rather than using, almost exclusively, temporary or free-lance interpreters. Council of Europe interpreters do not receive any special allowances and their expenses on official journeys are subject to the same economic criteria as those of other staff. Whereas free-lance interpreters are charged to Sub-head 71 (which also covers their travelling expenses and subsistence allowances), permanent Council of Europe staff interpreters travel on Sub-head 78.

The Assembly reiterates this suggestion and hopes that arrangements will be made for transfers between Subheads 71 and 78 when the use of staff interpreters saves money.

Sub-head 79 - Consultation of experts

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 354 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 469 000 F³)

3. In 1986, part of the appropriation under Sub-head 79 was used to finance the Assembly's exercise in scientific co-operation, which was transferred on 1 January 1987 to the Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport

This sub-head covers fees, travelling expenses, subsistence allowances and administrative assistance for experts- including those from non-member states-given specialised work or brought in for consultation by Assembly bodies, either individually or as members of working parties. 100 000 F of the appropriation are used to finance the European Parliamentary and Scientific Contact Group appointed by the Committee on Science and Technology to strengthen liaison with the European Parliament and ensure continuity in the preparations for parliamentary conferences.

Comments

The Assembly requests the same appropriation for 1988 as for 1987.

Sub-Head 80 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Indicative estimate for 1988 : 710 000 F

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 660 000 F

Increase: 50 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 303 000 F)

This covers the organisation of conferences, colloquies, symposia and seminars (including travelling and subsistence expenses of the experts and Council of Europe staff attending), publishing, translation and printing costs (including non-official languages), and entertainment and other expenses incidental to these meetings.

Comments

Expenditure under this sub-head was low in 1986 since a planned conference on political co-operation between Europe and Africa did not take place.

In order to make it possible to hold the 2nd Strasbourg Conference in 1987, the Committee of Ministers allocated the Assembly 100 000 F (exceptional non-recurring item of expenditure). In 1988, funds will be needed for the follow-up to this conference and preparations for the 3rd Strasbourg Conference. Moreover, the Assembly will organise a major conference in May-June 1988 to assess the results of the European Public Campaign on North-South Interdependence and Solidarity and the implementation of the Lisbon Declaration on the same subject. This conference will (together with an Assembly debate during the January 1988 session) constitute the Assembly's main contribution to the European campaign organised in co-operation with the European Community and the European Parliament. Finally, the Committee on Culture and Education will hold in 1988 a colloquy in Orvieto on "Cinema and Television: the audiovisual field as a vector of communication between Eastern and Western Europe". This colloquy will represent the Assembly's main contribution to the European Cinema and Television Year (1988). The overall costs of the Orvieto Colloquy are estimated at approximately 200 000 F of which 150 000 F should be covered by appropriations already made for 1988.

In the circumstances, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to renew the special allocation of 100 000 F and to increase the indicative appropriation under Sub-head 80 by 50 000 F in real terms for the Orvieto Colloquy.

Sub-head 81 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 91 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 91 000 F)

This covers refreshments for staff on night duty, car hire, gratuities for exceptional work during meetings of Assembly bodies not held at the Council of Europe headquarters, the purchase of medals, flags, flagpoles, etc., night watchmen. reception and information services, sundries and contingencies.

As decided by the Committee of Ministers, Subhead 81 has, since 1986, covered the expenses (travelling expenses and lump-sum allowance) of a few parliamentary officials from non-member states undergoing training with the Parliamentary Assembly.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the indicative appropriation for Sub-head 81 in 1988 be kept at the same level in real terms as in 1987.

Sub-head 81 his - Lump-sum contribution to the cost of modernising the Assembly's equipment (computerisation and office automation)

Token entry.

The Assembly is lagging behind the private sector and many parliamentary administrations in member states as far as computerisation and office automation are concerned. The Assembly is therefore prepared, in principle, to make a lump-sum contribution to the cost of modernising its equipment. The Assembly's main demands as regards computerisation were set out in a memorandum transmitted in January 1987 to the Secretary General, who is drawing up a plan for computerisation for 1987-89. The Assembly welcomes this initiative.

Sub-head 82 - Europe Prizes

Indicative estimate for 1988: 110 700 F

Indicative 1987 appropriation: 100 700 F

Increase: 10 000 F

(Approximate expenditure in 1986: 92 000 F)

This sub-head covers:

- the Europe Prize 35 000 F in 1987
- the Council of Europe Museum Prize 30 000 F in 1987
- the award to certain municipalities of a special medal for European merit 10 000 F (as from 1988)
- administrative expenses (handing over of prizes, including travel, dinners, receptions, flowers, diplomas, insurance, etc.) 35 700 F in 1987

Comments

The Assembly requests that the indicative appropriation under Sub-head 82 be increased by 10 000 F in real terms. The revised rules of the Europe Prize, which will come into force in 1988, foresee the award to some ten municipalities of a special medal "for European merit" (in fact, this is aimed at honouring the too many municipalities applying for the Europe Prize which cannot hope to win it in the foreseeable future).

Appendix

VOTE 111 of the ordinary budget - Expenditure of the Assembly	Appropriations for 1987	Increases in real terms proposed for 1988
	F	F
HEAD XV - Staff		
Sub-heads		
67 - Remuneration of permanent staff	16 325 000	
67 bis - Assembly staffing changes		402 500 ⁴
68 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis	60 000	
69 - Expenses on arrival and departure, home leave	144 500	
70 - Overtime and allowances for exceptional duties	77 000	
71 - Remuneration and accessory charges for temporary conference staff	9 956 000	
72 - Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration	930 000 ⁵	
TOTAL HEAD XV	28 281 400	402 500

VOTE III - Expenditure of the Assembly	Expenditure in 1986	Initial indicative appropriations for 1987	Increases in real terms proposed for 1988
	F	F	F
HEAD XVI - Special secretariat expenses and other expenses			
73 - Special secretariat expenses and other expenses	752 500	1 030 000	200 000 ⁶
TOTAL HEAD XVI	752 500	1 030 000	200 000
HEAD XVII - Supplies, services and other operational expenditure (budgetary package)			
Sub-heads / Articles			
74 - Publishing and printing	1 338 000	1 500 000	
75 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly	248 000	272 000	
76 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	124 000	149 000	
77 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of the members of the Assembly	411 000	393 000	20 000
78 - Official journeys	794 000	822 000	
79 - Consultation of experts	469 000	354 000	

4. Creation of an A4 post, upgrading of a B3 post to B4.

5. This sum will be frozen pending a Committee of Ministers decision to increase remuneration

6. First instalment of an increase of 500 000 F required for the political groups; the second and third instalments should be achieved in 1989 and 1990.

VOTE III - Expenditure of the Assembly	Expenditure in 1986	Initial indicative appropriations for 1987	Increases in real terms proposed for 1988
80 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences	303 000	660 000	50 000
81 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote	91 000	91 000	
81 bis - Lump-sum contribution to, the cost of modernising the Assembly's equipment (computerisation and office automation)			t.e
82 - Europe Prizes	92 000	100 700	10 000
TOTAL HEAD XVII	3 870 000	4 341 700	80 000
TOTAL VOTE III		33 653 100	682 500

Posts	Clerk, Deputy Clerk, President's Private Office, secretariats	Div. 1	Div. 11	Div. III	Table Office	Total
A7	1					1
A6		1			1	2
A5			1	1		2
A4	1	2	3	2	1	9 ⁷
A2 / A3	1	3	2	4		10 ⁸
B5	1				2	3
B4	1		1			2
B3	2	4	5	2	2	15
B2				2		2
Total	7	10	12	11	6	46

7. The organigramme of the Council of Europe Secretariat for 1987 provides for 10 A4 posts and 9 A2/A3 posts in the Office of the Clerk.

8. The organigramme of the Council of Europe Secretariat for 1987 provides for 10 A4 posts and 9 A2/A3 posts in the Office of the Clerk.