Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Opinion 151 (1990)[1]

Council of Europe general accounts and budgets for the years 1988, 1990 and 1991

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The conclusions of the Chair of the special meeting of the Committee of Ministers (Lisbon, 23-24 March 1990) contain an undertaking to improve the Organisation's operational capabilities and to provide for adequate budgetary growth.

2. It is highly desirable that this undertaking be translated into coherent budgetary decisions with the priority objective of enabling all parts of the Council of Europe to fulfilthe new tasks arising from the processes under way in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

3. The preparation and adoption of the 1991 budget must be set in an exceptional political context which includes the deposit of four applications for accession to theCouncil of Europe.

4. The Assembly accordingly adopts the following opinion :

a. The member states should fulfil their financial obligations towards the Council of Europe in full compliance with Article 39 of the Statute and Article 12 of the Financial Regulations ; in the future the Assembly should regularly receive all pertinent information in this respect.

b. Regarding the 1990 budget, in spite of increase, budget allocations have been below that of the Organisation's needs in general, and the Assembly's needs in particular.

c. The budget, as adopted by the Committee of Ministers, is inadequate having regard to the historic events to which the Council should contribute significantly and the newrequirements in the Council of Europe's activities.

d. The 1991 budget must be treated as a genuine starting point for the new dimension which the Council of Europe is to take on.

e. It seems, fortunately, that the Committee of Ministers, aware of this, is prepared to abandon the practice of zero growth which has for so long been a characteristic of itsbudgetary policy.

f. The Assembly supports the main lines of the preliminary draft intergovernmental programme for 1991, as submitted to the Committee of Ministers by the SecretaryGeneral, and in particular shares the concern to give preference to those intergovernmental activities which best meet the expectations and needs of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

g. Lastly, the Assembly reiterates the requests already made in the past, namely :

1. regrouping in a special budget, subsidiary to the general budget of the organisation, all expenditure related to the activities of the bodies set up under the European Convention on Human Rights ;

2. granting the Information Department the resources needed for implementing a dynamic information policy concerning the objectives, work and achievements of the Council of Europe ;

1. See Doc. 6255, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme, Rapporteur : Mr Eicher. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 July 1990.

3. taking the first steps towards actual realisation of the European Civil Service, as repeatedly but unsuccessfully requested by the Assembly ;

4. ensuring that co-operation with the European Communities results in the establishment of joint projects, bearing in mind the competences of each organisation and the need to avoid wasteful overlap of functions or responsibilities.