



Opinion 157 (1991)¹

Council of Europe general accounts and budgets for the years 1989, 1991 and 1992

Parliamentary Assembly

The Council of Europe's 1992 budget is being prepared in a particularly eventful political context, marked especially by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic's recent accession to the Organisation, the forthcoming accession of Poland after the holding of free general elections, consideration of two further applications to accede and the accession of the Soviet Union to the European Cultural Convention on 21 February 1991.

In the light of these political developments, the conclusions of the Chair of the Committee of Ministers' extraordinary meeting (Madrid, 21 February 1991) contain both a clear, formal reaffirmation of the Council of Europe's role in the new European order and precise guidelines regarding the assistance programmes for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Council of Europe must therefore be given the means to carry out the tasks arising from these new priorities to the best of its ability.

The Assembly accordingly adopts the following opinion :

1. With regard to the Council of Europe's general accounts for 1989, the Assembly notes with satisfaction the finding of the Board of Auditors that budgetary expenditure respected the purposes and amounts of the appropriations appearing in the amended budget and that financial management was conducted with a commendable sense of economy.
2. The Assembly also welcomes the reduction in the proportion of unspent appropriations, both for the Organisation as a whole and for the Assembly in particular.
3. With regard to the 1991 budget, the Assembly welcomes the fact that the Committee of Ministers has, by increasing it significantly in real terms, treated it as a real foundation for the new role the Council of Europe must now assume, as recommended by the Assembly in its [Opinion No. 151 \(1990\)](#).
4. The Assembly particularly welcomes the increase in the allocation to the political groups approved by the Committee of Ministers, as urged by the Assembly in its [Opinion No. 152 \(1990\)](#).
5. At the same time, the Assembly regrets the inadequacy of the appropriations allocated for the training of Secretariat staff in a period when human resources must be redeployed and motivated in accordance with the new priorities.
 - a. the need to consolidate recent gains, adapt the intergovernmental work programme more effectively to the new tasks and improve the co-ordination and coherence of the various activities ;
 - b. the need to step up the programmes of assistance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe for the purpose of meeting increased demands from those countries.
6. These two requirements call for sustained effort on the part of the Committee of Ministers and final abandonment of the zero growth principle, which was for a long time the distinguishing feature of its budgetary policy.

1. See [Doc. 6453](#)/[Doc. 6453](#), 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 28 June 1991.



7. With regard to the intergovernmental work programme, the Assembly emphasises the increasing pan-European importance of activities concerned with human rights, democracy, culture, education and youth, and hopes that the Committee of Ministers will not disappoint our new partners' expectations, but will take concrete steps such as the setting up of a new European youth centre of the Council of Europe in a country of Central or Eastern Europe, as has just been recommended by the Governing Board of the European Youth Centre and Foundation.
8. The Assembly repeats the request it has made several times in the past that the Organisation be given the resources it needs to implement a dynamic information policy.
9. The Assembly hopes that the Committee of Ministers will give early attention to the proposal that all expenditure relating to the activities of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights be brought together in a special budget subsidiary to the Organisation's general budget.