

Opinion 162 (1992)¹

Programme-budget for the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1993

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The object in the 1993 financial year must be to enable the Council, and especially the Assembly, to rise to the new challenges resulting from events in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly the disintegration of the USSR and Yugoslavia.
2. The Council of Europe must remain the prime European forum for all states which are democratic or moving towards democracy, and the Parliamentary Assembly must continue to play its special role in that connection.
3. The prospect of the Council further expanding and the urgency of responding to the growing number of requests for assistance from those countries need to be properly reflected in the 1993 budget.
4. In particular the Assembly is keen to develop its programme of co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe by adding programmes of legislative assistance (which would be provided on request to interested countries) to existing activities (ad hoc conferences in Central and Eastern Europe; meetings there of parliamentary committees; election monitoring; training for young parliamentarians; training for staff of Central and Eastern European assemblies; official visits to Central and Eastern Europe by members of the Assembly; meetings in connection with the Strasbourg Conference; support for the International Institute for Democracy).
5. In addition, the Assembly considers it essential to strengthen the staffing of the Clerk's Office in the manner set out in this opinion if the Assembly is to perform its work effectively and satisfactorily.
6. The Assembly also points out that in [Recommendation 1155 \(1991\)](#), on its powers in budgetary matters, it said: "As far as its own budget is concerned, the Assembly should enjoy a certain amount of independence in keeping with its dignity as an organ made up of members of national parliaments as well as with its concern to make its action more efficient."
7. Bearing in mind the aforementioned prospects and requirements, the Assembly sees its priorities as:
 - i. consolidating and increasing the resources it needs to make a more effective contribution, through dialogue, co-operation and legislative assistance, to the development of pluralist democracy in Central and Eastern Europe;
 - ii. extending the budgetary-package approach to the appropriations in Vote IX (Sub-head 9201, "Parliamentary activities");
 - iii. adapting the staffing and organisation of the Clerk's Office to the requirements which stem from the Council's geographical expansion and the Assembly's wider responsibilities;
 - iv. modernising its computer and office equipment.

As in previous years, the Assembly's opinion is in two parts:

- i. a table of 1992 appropriations and requested 1993 increases;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 1 July 1992. See [Doc. 6631](#), report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme (Rapporteur: Mr Oehler).



- ii. detailed explanations of the requests.

In the second part the Assembly also recapitulates the procedure for preparation of its opinion and states its budget priorities for 1993 (see the foreword).

Appendix 1 – TABLE OF REQUESTED INCREASES IN REAL TERMS IN 1993 COMPARED WITH INITIAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1992

VOTE III of the ordinary budget – Expenditure of the Assembly	Appropriations for 1992 FF	Changes in real terms proposed for 1993 FF
HEAD 3.1 – Staff		
Sub-heads		
3101 – Salary, allowances and social charges of the Clerk of the Assembly	979 000	
3102 – Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts	25 631 000	
3102 bis – Staffing changes requested in the Office of the Clerk		+ 3 025 000
3103 – Recruitment, arrival and departure expenses – Home leave	225 000	
3104 – Overtime – statutory and other allowances	94 000	
3105 – Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary Conference staff	14 462 000	+ 700 000
3106 – Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration	835 000	
TOTAL HEAD 3.1	42 226 000	+ 3 725 000
HEAD 3.2 – Allocation to the Assembly's political groups		
3201 – Allocation to the Assembly's political groups	2 221 000	+ 500 000
TOTAL HEAD 3.2	2 221 000	+ 500 000
HEAD 3.3 – Supplies, services and other operational expenditure		
Sub-heads		
3301 – Publishing and printing	1 760 000	
3301 bis – Communication needs		+ 1 300 000
3302 – Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly	450 000	
3303 – Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	280 000	
3304 – Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly	730 000	+ 200 000
3305 – Official journeys	1 600 000	
3306 – Expenses for inviting parliamentary delegations of non-member states	220 000	+ 2 500 000
3307 – Consultation of experts	410 000	
3308 – Organisation of ad hoc conferences	1 300 000	
3309 – Strasbourg Conference	800 000	
3310 – Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote	200 000	
3311 – Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment (computerisation and office automation)	t.e.	p.m.
3312 – Europe Prizes	250 000	
TOTAL HEAD 3.3	8 000 000	+ 4 000 000
TOTAL VOTE III	52 447 000	+ 8 225 000

VOTE IX – Contacts and co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe	Appropriations for 1992 FF	Changes in real terms proposed for 1993 FF
HEAD 9.2 – Parliamentary activities		
Sub-head		

VOTE IX – Contacts and co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe	Appropriations for 1992 FF	Changes in real terms proposed for 1993 FF
9201 – Programme of interparliamentary co-operation a. Legislative assistance b. Colloquies c. Training of young parliamentarians d. Training of parliamentary administrative staff	1 469 000	+ 2 000 000
TOTAL HEAD 9.2 (Vote IX)	1 469 000	+ 2 000 000

Appendix 2 – DETAILED JUSTIFICATION OF THE CHANGES REQUESTED IN REAL TERMS

Foreword

The Assembly is called upon, as it is every year, to give its opinion on Vote III of the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe, that is the part of the draft budget dealing with appropriations pertaining to its operations. The appropriations pertaining to facilities, supplies and equipment do not come under this vote.

The increases requested for 1993 should be regarded as increases in real terms over the Assembly's appropriations for 1992. As in previous years, the Assembly is leaving it to the Secretariat's administrative departments to assess in due course the adjustments that are being or will be made to 1992 appropriations as a result of changes in salary scales, implications of such changes for 1993 and the provisions that need to be made for salary adjustments in 1993. Similarly, it will be up to the Secretary General to adjust the other appropriations for inflation.

The amounts of the appropriations requested by the Assembly for 1993 will thus be determined by the total appropriations allocated to the Assembly for 1992 (including any additional appropriations allocated in the course of the year) plus:

- the increases in real terms requested in this opinion;
- the technical adjustments made by the Secretariat.

The Assembly's priorities are to:

- consolidate and increase the resources it needs to contribute more effectively, through dialogue, co-operation and legislative assistance, to fostering pluralist democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe;
- extend the technique of the budgetary package to appropriations under Vote IX (Sub-head 9201 Parliamentary activities);
- adjust the staff complement and adapt the administrative structure of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly to meet demands on it arising from the Organisation's geographical extension and the Assembly's wider responsibilities;
- modernise its computer and office equipment.

Analysis of the various estimates by budgetary item

VOTE III – EXPENDITURE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

HEAD 3.1 Staff

Sub-head 3101 – Salary, allowances and social charges of the Clerk of the Assembly

Sub-head 3102 – Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts

This appropriation covers the basic salaries, allowances (both non-recurring and periodic) and social insurance of the staff of the Office of the Clerk, which comprises the following 56 posts:

- one A7 post
- two A6 posts²
- three A5 posts
- thirteen A4 posts
- eleven A2/A3 posts
- four B5 posts
- four B4 posts

2. One of which has been provisionally frozen by a Committee of Ministers decision (410th meeting – September 1987) to enable an appointment at A5 level and an appointment at A4 level on an A2/A3 post.

- sixteen B3 posts
- two B2 posts.

Sub-head 3102 bis – Staffing changes requested in the Office of the Clerk

Estimates for 1993: (3 025 000 F)

- creation of one A5 post: 565 000 F
- creation of two A2/A3 posts: 750 000 F
- creation of three B3 posts: 690 000 F
- creation of two A4 posts: 1 020 000 F

Comments

a. Creation of an A5 post

In its [Opinion No. 158 \(1991\)](#), the Assembly expounded various restructuring requirements for the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly. Optimum use of human resources, an increase in the Assembly's efficiency and the strengthening of its ability to carry out its programmes coherently remain essential objectives in regard to the challenges posed by the enlargement of the Organisation and the quantitative and (it is to be hoped) qualitative enhancement of the pan-European programmes of interparliamentary co-operation.

Supervising the secretariats of the Assembly's thirteen permanent committees and their sub-committees and monitoring the activities conducted by the Assembly's various organs are tasks that call for a strengthening of the complement of Heads of Division (grade A5), who at present number three. The creation of two grade-A5 posts would be desirable in order to permit a more balanced, and hence more efficient, redistribution of the work of supervision and the other tasks of co-ordination and stimulation devolving on the Heads of Division. For the sake of prudence and stringency, however, the Assembly confines itself, in respect of the 1993 financial year, to requesting the creation of one Head of Division post (A5).

b. Creation of two A2/A3 posts (committee secretaries)

In [Opinion No. 158 \(1991\)](#), the Assembly noted that the Office of the Clerk had staffing difficulties. In particular, it established the principle that Assembly committees comprising between 40 and 50 members, an equal number of alternates and some special guests, should be able to rely on the full-time services of at least two A-grade members of staff (one A4 and one A2/A3). The posts the Committee of Ministers decided to create through a supplementary budget in 1991 and the 1992 budget will make it possible to apply this principle to some of these committees in the near future, ie those on Economic Affairs, Social, Health and Family Affairs and Migration, Refugees and Demography. Nevertheless, the secretariats of the Political Affairs Committee and the Committee on Legal Affairs will still have only one and a half members of staff at their disposal, as the two co-secretaries of these committees assist the Clerk on a part-time basis. The creation of a post of executive assistant to the Clerk of the Assembly, discussed in the following paragraph, would give full effect to the principle established by the Assembly in its above-mentioned opinion, as the duties of the two members of staff would be entrusted to an A4-grade executive assistant to the Clerk.

Moreover, the Assembly must give some thought not only to the five above-mentioned committees, but also to the others with between 30 to 40 members, an equal number of alternates and some special guests. In the Assembly's view, these committees ought to have the services of at least one and a half members of staff, as the duties of all the Assembly committees are constantly growing because of the Organisation's geographical extension and the Assembly's closer co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In order to be realistic, the Assembly is merely requesting the creation of two A2/A3 posts for the 1993 financial year. In this way, four out of the five above-mentioned committees could be assisted by a part-time co-secretary.

At the same time, the creation of two A2/A3 posts in the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly would enable the Office to absorb officials from the new member countries. Indeed, the Assembly has repeatedly argued that the staff complement of the Office of the Clerk should grow in line with the enlargement of the Organisation, as the accession of new members brings a general increase in the Office's work load, especially that of committee secretaries. The numerous reasons for this include:

- the increase in the number of initiatives taken by the parliamentarians and political groups;

- the increase in the number of Representatives and Substitutes³;
- the necessity for the Secretariat to extend its research into a very wide variety of fields (political, economic, cultural, social, scientific, legal, etc).

Moreover, there should ideally be at least one A-grade staff member in the Office of the Clerk for each new country, to facilitate contacts with the new member countries and cope with the language difficulties of some of their parliamentarians.

In this connection, the Committee of Ministers has yielded to the Assembly's arguments and has recently created two A2/A3-grade posts of committee secretary, on account of the accession of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. No new post has yet been created on the strength of Poland's membership.

It should also be noted, for the record, that it would be advisable to contemplate the creation of an A2/A3 post (administrator responsible for administrative and budgetary questions) in the central division that is to be set up, as the additional financial resources of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly and the significant growth of its activities have rendered the supervision of budgetary and financial operations more complex. These duties are at present carried out by a B5-grade member of staff. This classification does not now seem to be in keeping with the functions the holder of this post has to perform.

c. Creation of three B3 posts (senior clerk)

Staffing problems have also become increasingly acute among B grades. In the past, the creation of new A2/A3-grade posts has not always gone hand in hand with the creation of a sufficient number of B-category posts. Although these problems cannot be cured at a stroke, it is now essential to attend to the most pressing needs and remove the worst anomalies.

For many years, the secretaries of the heads of Divisions III and IV have also been providing secretarial services for two large committees, that is to say the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee and the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, whose activities have built up to such an extent that the two assistants ought to devote all of their time to the work of these committees. Two B3-grade posts of secretaries of the heads of Divisions III and IV should therefore be created. Obviously, the holders of these posts would likewise be called upon to provide secretarial assistance for the committees in their respective divisions.

In [Opinion No. 158 \(1991\)](#), the Assembly advocated the creation of a central division comprising at least a head of division (A5), an administrative assistant (B5) and a secretarial assistant (B3). Because of the tightness of the budget, the Assembly refrained from asking for the creation of the B3 post in the 1992 budget. The creation of this post is now vital if the central division is to function efficiently. The holder of this B3 post would have the dual responsibility of acting as secretary to the head of the central division and helping the B5-grade administrative assistant responsible for the technical and practical organisation of colloquies, summer meetings and the Strasbourg Conference.

d. Creation of two A4 posts (press officer and executive assistant to the Clerk of the Assembly)

The paucity of financial and human resources devoted to communication is keenly felt by the parliamentarians. The motion for a recommendation on the need to increase the resources of the Council of Europe, presented by Mr Worms and others ([Doc. 6517](#)), evidences the Assembly's real frustration about the scant media impact of the Assembly's activities. The Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme has decided to forward the above-mentioned motion for a recommendation to the two Rapporteurs for an opinion on the budget. As this need must be borne in mind in the opinion on the Organisation's general budget, it cannot be ignored in this opinion on the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1993. The creation of an A4-grade post for a press officer should be strongly recommended. This person would have the following duties:

- look after the whole Assembly's relations with the media;

3. In 1988, when the Council of Europe had 21 members, there were 170 Representatives in the Assembly (plus an equal number of Substitutes). There were two observer states and no special guests.

The Assembly now has 210 regular members and as many Substitutes, that is 420 members in total. Many Substitutes regularly attend plenary meetings and committee meetings, even when the regular member is present. The delegations of "special guests" (who have no substitutes) and observer delegations must be added to this. The delegations of special guests (Albania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Slovenia and Croatia) consist of some 49 parliamentarians.

- in particular, assist the President in his contacts with the press in Strasbourg and on his official journeys;
- closely supervise Assembly publications.

The press officer would be attached to the central division.

The chief reason for creating this post is to strengthen the Assembly's relations with the press. It goes without saying that in the future, the Assembly will also have to continue to rely on the support and services of the Directorate of Information.

As explained in the previous paragraph, the Clerk of the Assembly is at present assisted by two A2/A3-grade members of staff who are, at the same time, the co-secretaries of two large committees. The latter's operational requirements call for a different solution, namely the creation of a post of executive assistant to the Clerk, who would be mainly responsible for the preparation and updating of the files dealt with directly by the Clerk and who ought to be classed as an A4 owing to the wide variety of his/her functions.

Sub-head 3103 – Recruitment, arrival and departure expenses, home leave

Sub-head 3104 – Overtime – Statutory and other allowances

Sub-head 3105 – Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary conference staff

Increase requested for 1993: 700 000 F

An increase of 700 000 F should be provided to meet expanding needs in the field of publications, on the one hand and interpretation and translation, on the other. As far as publications are concerned, the object is to enable the Assembly not only to publish more documents by recruiting the requisite staff for the work associated with this, but also to contribute to the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD). The aims of this Centre are in short: to promote the exchange of information between parliaments, prevent duplication of research efforts and establish close co-operation on documentation among parliamentary libraries and research services, including access to Community and national data banks. The ECPRD was set up by a decision of the Conference of Presidents of European Parliamentary Assemblies meeting in Vienna in 1977. At the last conference, held in Strasbourg on 21 and 22 February 1992, the participants approved the principle that parliaments participating in the conference should contribute directly or indirectly to the financing of the ECPRD's activities. The Parliamentary Assembly could contribute by taking care of a number of translations and publications.

The increase in appropriations under this sub-head will likewise make it possible to hold a plenary debate lasting for one or two days during summer meetings, like those which have taken place since 1990.

Lastly, the series of events being held in the countries which have just joined the Council of Europe and the countries with special guest status are entailing supplementary expenditure on temporary conference staff. This is especially true of the round tables or colloquies that accompany the holding of committee meetings in these countries.

Sub-head 3106 – Provision for the cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration

The Assembly proposes that the 1993 appropriations for Sub-heads 3103, 3104 and 3106 be kept at the same level in real terms as in 1992.

HEAD 3.2 – Allocation to the Assembly's political groups

Increase requested: 500 000 F

The Assembly's political groups, which were not granted any increase in 1992, must be given the means to join in the whole Assembly's effort to foster the democratic process in Central and Eastern Europe. For this reason, direct co-operation between the political forces represented in each group and their counterparts in the new democracies is of great value and likely to give a substantial boost to the Assembly's programme (see Vote IX). On these grounds, an increase of 500 000 F in real terms should be requested.

BUDGETARY PACKAGE

Since 1975, the appropriations under the following sub-heads have been voted in a lump sum. The various amounts in this package may subsequently be altered under Article 31 of the Financial Regulations.

The budgetary package covers the following items:

Sub-head 3301 – Publishing and printing

Sub-head 3301 bis – Expenses for communication needs

Increase requested: 1 300 000 F

As part of the Assembly's efforts to acquire greater autonomy in its management, as well as control of its expenditure (see, in particular, [Recommendation 1155 \(1991\)](#)), it is considered desirable to try to single out expenses resulting from the Assembly's communication needs (postage and carriage, telecommunications etc).

Such expenses, which have so far been charged to the general budget (Vote I – sub-heads 1504 and 1302), are increasing as the Assembly broadens its contacts in accordance with its pan-European role.

At a conservative estimate (based on 1991 figures), these expenses amount to approximately FF 1 300 000.

Sub-head 3302 – Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Sub-head 3303 – Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

The Assembly proposes that the 1993 appropriations for Sub-heads 3301, 3302 and 3303 be kept at the same level in real terms as in 1992.

Sub-head 3304 – Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly

Increase requested..... 200 000 F

An increase in real terms of 200 000 F is the minimum needed to cover the continual rise in the costs of:

- rapporteurs' official journeys linked to the preparation of reports calling for visits to the various countries of Central and Eastern Europe;
- Assembly members' participation in intergovernmental and interparliamentary legislative assistance (see Vote IX below).

Sub-head 3305 – Official journeys

The Assembly merely requests that the sum be adjusted for inflation in 1993.

Sub-head 3306 – Expenses for inviting Parliamentary delegations of non-member states

Increase requested.....2 500 000 F

At its meeting on 16 February 1992, the Bureau of the Assembly adopted the arrangements for refunding the travel and subsistence expenses of delegations of special guests and other guests (parliamentarians and parliamentary officials) from Central and East European countries. The purpose of this politically important decision is to secure these delegations' participation in the Assembly's deliberations. At this stage, it is possible to give only a rough estimate of the budgetary impact of the Bureau's decision and the requisite increase of appropriations in real terms is put at 2 500 000 F.

Sub-head 3307 – Consultation of experts

Sub-head 3308 – Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Sub-head 3309 – Strasbourg Conference

Sub-head 3310 – Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote

The Assembly proposes that the 1993 appropriations for Sub-heads 3307, 3308, 3309 and 3310 be kept at the same level in real terms as in 1992.

Sub-head 3311 – Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment (computerisation and office automation)

Token entry

As explained in the foreword to this opinion, one of the Assembly's priorities is still the modernisation of its equipment. It is therefore prepared to make a lump-sum contribution to this from its budgetary package, appropriations permitting.

Sub-head 3312 – Europe Prizes

The Assembly requests that this sum be adjusted for inflation in 1993.

VOTE IX – CO-OPERATION WITH THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

HEAD 9.2 – Parliamentary activities

As pointed out in the foreword to this opinion, the Assembly requests that the appropriations under Vote IX be included in the budgetary package for reasons of efficiency, administrative flexibility and coherence. The Assembly needs to have the requisite freedom to allocate all the appropriations in the budgetary package proper and in Head 9.2 of Vote IX, as needs arise during the year. Moreover, in practice it is hard to distinguish between certain "statutory" activities directed towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and other activities relating more specifically to the training of the parliamentarians or parliamentary staff of these countries.

Sub-head 9201 – Programme of interparliamentary co-operation

Increase requested: 2 000 000 F

At present the programme of interparliamentary co-operation covered by Sub-head 9201 of the ordinary budget comprises the following activities:

- a. colloquies
- b. the training of young parliamentarians
- c. the training of parliamentary administrative staff.

In view of the priority that the Assembly attaches to the ongoing dialogue and co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is essential that it shoulder its share of the responsibility for legislative assistance. This activity is designed to supplement the bilateral and multilateral help given by the intergovernmental sector of the Council of Europe. The parliamentary organs of the countries in question are calling more and more on the experience of their colleagues in the Parliamentary Assembly, when it comes to framing and adopting laws or other legislative measures in spheres where the need to transform the societies in question is most urgent. Nor must it be forgotten that in these new democracies, the respective roles of the government and parliament as legislators are in the process of being forged and moulded in accordance with the specific characteristics and requirements of each country. The Assembly therefore wishes to set up bilateral co-operation and "tailor-made" operations to be implemented jointly with the parliamentary authorities of each beneficiary country. Furthermore, at the Conference of Presidents of European Parliamentary Assemblies, several Speakers, especially from Central and Eastern European countries, stressed that it was necessary for parliaments throughout Europe to step up co-operation and underlined that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe ought to act as a catalyst in this context. Of course, for the sake of efficiency, this programme obviously had to be dovetailed with those being implemented at intergovernmental level. On the basis of some preliminary contacts and a provisional inventory of needs, the Assembly is requesting an increase of 2 000 000 F in real terms in the appropriations under this sub-head.

Comments

In addition to the requests in Head 3.1 (Staff), the Assembly is requesting the following increases in real terms:

- Sub-head 3201 (allocation to the Assembly's political groups): 500 000 FF
- Sub-head 3301 *bis* (communication needs): 1 300 000 FF

- Sub-head 3304 (representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly): 200 000 FF
- Sub-head 3306 (expenses for inviting parliamentary delegations of non-member states): 2 500 000 FF

The Assembly is also requesting that in 1993 the other sub-heads in the package be increased to take account of inflation.

In Vote IX of the ordinary budget, Head 9.2 ("Parliamentary activities"), the Assembly requests the following increases in real terms:

- **Sub-head 9201** (programme of interparliamentary co-operation): 2 000 000 FF

N.B.: The Assembly requests that the budgetary-package approach be extended to the appropriations in Vote IX.