Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Opinion 192 (1995)[1]

Budgets of the Council of Europe for the financial years 1995 and 1996

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The 1996 Council of Europe budget is being prepared, as before, with a view to implementing the decisions taken by the summit of heads of state and government of Council of Europe member states held in Vienna on 8 and 9 October 1993.

2. New accessions took place in 1995 and have had inevitable implications which the 1996 budget must take into account.

3. The Assembly has already expressed its deep concern over the decision taken by the Ministers' Deputies to impose zero growth on the Council's 1995 budget.

4. In this respect, the Assembly recalls its Recommendations 1038 (1986) and 1155 (1991) on the powers of the Assembly in budgetary matters and asks to be associated in the preparation of the budget of the Organisation, specifically as regards its Vote III (operating appropriations of the Assembly).

5. Consequently,

A. With regard to the 1995 budget, the Assembly:

1. welcomes the improvements resulting from the new method for the calculation of member states' contributions to the Council of Europe budget;

2. cannot but observe that the 1995 budget has led to restriction of activities in sectors which are vital to the Council's proper running;

3. deplores the fact that no substantial alteration has been made to the establishment table, despite the work overload affecting all Secretariat departments and notwithstanding the new accessions which occurred in 1995, which were already foreseen when adopting the budget.

B. With regard to the budget prospects for 1996, the Assembly :

1. considers that the Council of Europe should be provided with the necessary resources in order to enable it to realise its true pan-European dimension and fulfil its mission as guardian of democratic security throughout Europe, inter alia by keeping up the effort to discover alternative financing arrangements for certain sectors of activity;

2. asks member states to pursue coherent policies regarding the role which they have assigned to the Council of Europe, and to consider the possibility of creating a specific heading for that purpose in national budgets;

3. emphasises the fact that the Council of Europe's budget is comparatively modest;

4. asks that the Council of Europe receive more favourable budgetary treatment in the years ahead, and reiterates its desire for the budget to be suitably increased at each accession;

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1. See Doc. 7416Doc. 7416, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme, rapporteur: Mr Schreiner. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 9 November 1995.

5. calls on the Committee of Ministers to make a feasibility study on the introduction of programming over several years which would enable the Organisation to implement its allotted activities more effectively;

6. asks that the Organisation be equipped with high-performance computerised management tools suited to its needs;

7. reiterates its wish that a genuine information and communication policy be framed for the Council of Europe;

8. encourages the Committee of Ministers to pursue its reflection on the reinforcement and redeployment of Secretariat staff;

9. supports the continuation of the rationalisation drive for reallocation of resources to what are regarded as priority sectors;

10. gives all its support to the Secretary General's initiative regarding the special programme for candidate countries.