Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1155 (1991)[1]
Final version

Powers of the Assembly in budgetary matters

Parliamentary Assembly

The Council of Europe is at the centre of major political changes whose institutional effects need to be taken into account. It was in this spirit that the Assembly, in Recommendation 1139 (1991) on the institutional role of the Council of Europe in a continent aspiring to greater unity, recommended that the Committee of Ministers ‘‘consider urgently in 1991 (that is to say during the chairmanship of Spain and Sweden), together with the Parliamentary Assembly, all steps necessary, including the revision of the 1949 Statute, to ensure that the Council of Europe will be in a position to assume fully its responsibilities in the institutional framework emerging on the European continent".

The budgetary powers conferred on the Assembly by current texts and practice are not in keeping either with its nature as an organ of national parliamentarians or with the political role it has succeeded in playing in the face of the recent, far-reaching shifts in European balances.

Each year the Assembly is asked to provide two opinions (on the Council of Europe's general budget and on its own budget) relating to the following financial year without either having seen the draft budget submitted to the Committee of Ministers by the Secretary General or being aware of the positions of the bodies involved in the budgetary process (Ministers' Deputies, Budget Committee).

In respect of the Organisation's general budget, it would be appropriate to improve and expand the consultation of the Assembly by altering both the procedure and the timetable.

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. For these reasons, the Assembly makes the following recommendations to the Committee of Ministers :

a. With regard to the general budget of the Council of Europe :

1. the following elements should be communicated to the Assembly in good time for the purposes of preparing its opinion on the budget :

   a. the indicative growth rates and main objectives adopted by the Ministers' Deputies ;

   b. the Secretary General's draft budget and intergovernmental programme of activities ;

   c. the reports of the Budget Committee ;

2. dates should be set by mutual agreement between the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and the President of the Assembly for the adoption of the Assembly's opinion by the Standing Committee and for the examination of the draft budget by the Committee of Ministers in the light of the Assembly's opinion

1. See Doc. 6455, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme, Rapporteur : Mr Martínez. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 28 June 1991.

b. With regard to the Assembly's operational appropriations on the basis of Article 41 of the Statute of the Council of Europe :

1. Article 38, paragraph d, of the Statute should be replaced by the following text :‘‘The Assembly establishes the amount of its expenditure, with the exception of staff, the annual growth rate being determined by agreement between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly."

2. Article 16 of the Statute should consequently be amended to read as follows : ‘‘... subject to the provisions of Articles 24, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35 and38.d...".