



Resolution 1575 (2007)¹

Political dimension of the Council of Europe budget

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1) confers no responsibility in budgetary matters on the institution's Parliamentary Assembly. However, as early as 1953, the Committee of Ministers granted the Assembly the right to give an opinion on the budget. By virtue of this decision, the Assembly can discuss these matters and transmit its conclusions to the Committee of Ministers.
2. Since then, in its opinions on the Organisation's budgets, the Assembly has submitted ideas and proposals with a view to placing the Council of Europe in a position to assume its unique role of guarantor of the democratic values shared throughout the European continent, and indeed other continents, since its sphere of influence extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific.
3. Europe has changed since 1949, and the Assembly has taken action to help the Organisation adapt to the changes. Indeed, its resolutions and recommendations have been the starting point for many European conventions and treaties which are now part and parcel of European citizens' lives, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5).
4. The Assembly was the first European institution to open up to the countries of central and eastern Europe and played an essential political role in this respect. It gave the new democracies the opportunity to participate in building a united Europe by, as from 1989, granting special guest status to all the national legislative assemblies of European non-member states which so requested and then, in 1993, introducing a recognised mechanism for the monitoring of member states' obligations and commitments (Order No. 488 on honouring of commitments entered into by member states).
5. In refusing to view the situation solely from a financial angle, the Assembly is not seeking to dissociate itself from any reform or administrative modernisation of the Council of Europe, but cannot accept the current easy answer of financing the Court's additional requirements and the full-year effects of decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers through ill-considered, across-the-board reductions in the appropriations allocated to all the other sectors of activity of the Organisation and to the Assembly itself. If this tendency is borne out, it will have very serious political consequences.
6. The Assembly is not convinced that the current policy of efficiency gains applied across the board, in particular in the fields of translation and interpretation, is a good solution. The term "efficiency gains" in fact cloaks net reductions in appropriations, which will inevitably not only diminish the linguistic quality of the documents produced but also upset the balance between the Organisation's two official languages in favour of a monolingualism incompatible with the Statute of the Council of Europe.
7. The Council of Europe is a political and standard-setting organisation, whose work of a lasting nature mainly concerns judgments, conventions and recommendations, the French and English versions of which must be perfectly consistent so as to prevent any risk of misinterpretation.
8. The intellectual input to the Council of Europe's work by its officials is of key importance and constitutes an assets base to be preserved. The remuneration policy must accordingly be sufficiently attractive to deter staff from leaving the Organisation to take up jobs with other public or private institutions. The Assembly

1. Assembly debate on 3 October 2007 (33rd Sitting) (see [Doc. 11371](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Wille). Text adopted by the Assembly on 3 October 2007 (33rd Sitting).



accordingly sets special store by maintaining the conditions afforded by the current co-ordinated salary-setting system which, albeit not perfect, is the best guarantee of being able to recruit and retain the skilled international staff essential to ensure the impact of the Organisation's work.

9. The Assembly requests the Secretary General, as the manager of the Council of Europe's funds, to distinguish in a reform approach between issues that are political in nature, issues of purely administrative expenditure and issues affecting the programme of activities, and in particular to:

9.1. abide by the principle of prior consultation of the political and judicial organs and bodies other than the Committee of Ministers, especially where their expenditure is concerned;

9.2. report on his past management and set out his political and budgetary vision for the future in his annual statement before the Assembly.

10. Lastly, the Assembly invites the members of the national delegations to:

10.1. question their governmental authorities (Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs) about their intentions regarding the financing of the Council of Europe;

10.2. pay particular attention during budgetary discussions to their state's commitment vis-à-vis the Council of Europe and, if necessary, defend the national contribution to the Council of Europe's budgets;

10.3. hold – at least once a year within their respective parliaments – a debate on the specific subject of the Council of Europe and/or its activities.