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## **Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2014-2015**

### **Report<sup>1</sup>**

Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs  
Rapporteur: Mr Rudy SALLES, France, Group of the European People's Party

### *Summary*

At a time of stringent budgetary austerity policies, the Parliamentary Assembly recognises the desire of many member States to adopt a biennial budget based on zero nominal growth and is prepared to play its part in the budget adjustments being asked of the Organisation as a whole. It is anxious, however, that measures dictated by exceptional circumstances should not serve as an excuse for strategic choices that could undermine the Council of Europe's statutory mission in the medium and long term.

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1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision, Reference 3936 of 8 March 2013.



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## A. Draft resolution<sup>2</sup>

1. In pursuance of Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers and Article 24 of the Financial Regulations, the Parliamentary Assembly issues an opinion each year concerning the expenditure relating to its operation. The amounts allocated to the Assembly in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe cover its expenditure on staff and the costs associated with its own functioning and the functioning of its political groups. Since 2010, the Assembly presents the opinion concerning its own expenditure in the form of a resolution.
2. The Assembly is aware that a large number of member States have embarked on strict policies of budgetary austerity and that these will have budgetary ramifications for the Council of Europe. It understands, therefore, the desire of the majority of countries to reduce the amount of their contribution to the Council of Europe's budgets and to impose zero nominal growth on the Organisation.
3. The Assembly is anxious, however, that the current difficulties should not serve as an excuse for member States to impose strategic choices that could undermine the Council of Europe's statutory mission in the medium and long term.
4. In this context, the Assembly wishes to reiterate its position, as set out in its [Resolution 1817 \(2011\)](#) on the expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the financial years 2012-2013, namely that the Council of Europe's core business should not exclude the "enabling factors" of culture, education and social cohesion, and migration issues, as they contribute to the realisation of the Organisation's core values.
5. The Assembly wishes to point out that in recent years, it has contributed to the policy of reducing costs, both in terms of staff-related expenditure and in terms of operational expenditure. Thus the proportion of the budget of the Assembly in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe has decreased steadily since 2005 (in 2005, the Assembly's budget accounted for 7.8% of the ordinary budget and for the biennium 2012-2013 this share fell to 6.8% of the ordinary budget).
6. Whatever decisions are made, the Assembly will continue its activities within the framework of its key missions, as set out in its [Resolution 1822 \(2011\)](#) on the reform of the Parliamentary Assembly, namely:
  - 6.1. strengthening the Assembly's political relevance and effectiveness;
  - 6.2. making the Assembly more visible;
  - 6.3. improving Assembly members' participation, while reinforcing interaction between the Assembly and national parliaments;
  - 6.4. strengthening European interparliamentary co-operation, including with the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
7. With specific reference to interparliamentary co-operation, the Assembly draws attention to the work carried out by the Parliamentary Projects Support Division of the Assembly secretariat (set up in January 2012) in preparing a structured co-operation programme and in raising extra-budgetary funds, in close co-operation with the committee secretariats. In 2012, for example, more than €200 000 worth of voluntary contributions were received from member States and private foundations (Open Society Foundations).
8. The Assembly wishes to express its sincere appreciation to those member States, in particular Germany, which, through their voluntary contributions, have helped finance activities related *inter alia* to the parliamentary dimension of the One in Five campaign to combat sexual violence against children and the campaign to promote the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention, CETS No. 210).
9. The Assembly also welcomes the signing, at the beginning of April 2013, of a partnership agreement with a private foundation, enabling it to promote ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, CETS No. 201). It invites its Parliamentary Projects Support Division to continue its work in developing targeted co-operation and seeking extra-budgetary resources.

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2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 25 April 2013.

10. Over the next biennium 2014-2015, the Assembly will focus on:

10.1. general policy measures: with stricter preselection of resolutions and recommendations reflecting the Assembly's concerns, so as to ensure better follow-up to adopted texts within national parliaments, and greater awareness of these texts, not only in parliaments of member States but also in parliaments which enjoy observer or partner for democracy status;

10.2. communication and media: by improving media coverage, by making the debates more interesting and more lively (with the introduction of free debates, for example), by having a more interactive and user-friendly website and making better use of new communication channels (for example social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia) to explore new ways of initiating reports on relevant topics;

10.3. working methods: by switching to electronic production of Assembly documents (XML format) and therefore ceasing to publish printed versions of the Assembly's adopted texts.

11. With regard to its own expenditure, and bearing in mind the requirement for zero nominal growth and the obligation to take on board compulsory adjustments (related to the payment of seniority-based increments to staff and the outstanding cost resulting from the salary adjustment for 2013), the Assembly can agree to the request made by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to reduce the Assembly's expenditure for the biennium 2014-2015 both in terms of its staff (€145 000 in 2014 and €50 000 in 2015) and in terms of its other operational activities (€80 000 for the biennium). It does not want to see its budget for 2014 and 2015 reduced any further, however.

12. Accordingly, the A6 post of Director of Political and Legal Affairs, currently vacant, will be eliminated as from 2014 and the C4 messenger post will be eliminated in 2015. In addition, operational expenditure will be cut by €80 000 for the biennium 2014-2015. It asks its Secretary General to reorganise the Assembly secretariat and budget accordingly. Furthermore, faced with the decision of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to stop inviting journalists during its part-sessions, the Assembly asks its Secretary General to seek other ways to keep plenary sessions in the public eye.

13. Lastly, the Assembly hopes that the investment budget will not be reduced for the draft biennial budget and that the plans to modernise the Assembly Chamber will go ahead, particularly as regards replacing the electronic voting system which dates from the 1980s and is liable to break down at any time.

Appended to this resolution are:

- i. a brief explanation of the main items of expenditure;
- ii. a table setting out the Assembly's work programme according to the results-based budgeting method.

## Appendix 1

### Vote III – Expenditure of the Assembly

#### – Staff expenditure

1. This appropriation corresponds to the basic salaries, allowances (non-recurring and periodic) and social cover of the permanent staff of the secretariat of the Assembly (87 posts, plus 1 specially appointed official) and of temporary staff (including 6 positions).

2. In 2014 and 2015, the Secretary General of the Assembly will continue the reorganisation of the secretariat in line with the decisions taken by the Assembly as part of its reform, under way since January 2012, and having regard, as far as possible, to the requests made by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Also, in order to be able to absorb its share of the mandatory adjustments related to staff expenditure, it is planned to scale down the administrative structure of the Assembly secretariat. The information given at present is based on the current structure of the Assembly comprising eight committees: two of these committees (Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and Monitoring Committee) have 89 members (the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy has also 84 alternates, the Monitoring Committee has no alternates), five others have 84 members (and 84 alternates) and the remaining one, the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs has 37 and no alternates. As at 1 January 2013, the secretariat comprised 87 permanent posts, 6 positions and 1 specially appointed official, broken down as follows:

<b>Permanent posts:</b>		
1 specially appointed official		
1 A7	1 B6	1 C4
2 A6	5 B5	
9 A5	12 B4	
10 A4	16 B3	
23 A2/A3	7 B2	
<b>Positions:</b>		
4 A1/A3	1 B5	
	1 B3	

3. At present, the secretariat of the Assembly is organised so that the eight Assembly committees have 48 staff members working for them, including 26 A-grade permanent staff, 18 B-grade permanent staff and 3 A-grade permanent staff and 1 B-grade staff member on fixed-term positions).

4. The remaining 45 staff members (43 permanent posts and 2 permanent staff on fixed-term positions) work for the Bureau of the Assembly, the Private Office of the President of the Assembly, the Table Office, the Election Observation Division, the Parliamentary Projects Support Division, the Central Division, the Communication Division and the Information Technology Unit.

#### – Supplies, services and other operational expenditure

5. In recent years, the Assembly has made substantial savings by rationalising its work to reduce its operational expenditure. The Assembly's overall budget fell in real terms by 2% between 2005 and 2010, and this downward trend has continued over the period 2012-2013.

6. The creation of a new Parliamentary Projects Support Division has paved the way for new assistance and co-operation programmes suited to the needs of parliamentary institutions, in close co-operation with the Assembly committees. The new division is also tasked with finding extra-budgetary resources (voluntary contributions and/or European Union contributions) so as to respond appropriately to the specific needs of the parliaments of Council of Europe member States or those enjoying partner for democracy status. In 2012, the Assembly thus received over €200 000 in voluntary contributions.

7. The reform of the Assembly's functioning has also enabled the Assembly committees to hold a greater number of thematic hearings and conferences, thus providing valuable input for their work. At the same time, the Assembly will continue to co-operate closely with other European parliamentary assemblies (the European

Parliament, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), etc.) and international parliamentary assemblies (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Pan-African Parliament, etc.).

8. As regards external communication and visibility, the Assembly will continue its modernisation efforts with, for example, the launch of a new Assembly website which is both interactive and user-friendly. It will press ahead with its efforts to reduce paper consumption and, among other things, will stop publishing printed versions of adopted texts. Furthermore, faced with the decision of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to stop inviting journalists during its part-sessions, the Assembly asks its Secretary General to seek other ways to keep plenary sessions in the public eye.

9. The Assembly will also continue to support its political groups through their allocation, which is based on a lump sum for secretarial assistance paid to each of the existing groups along with an additional per capita amount which varies according to their membership.

10. To sum up, the draft budget for 2014 and 2015 in real terms (not including inflation and salary adjustments), which does not include pension costs for staff, amounts to:

**For information, the budget for 2013:**

2013	9 939 300	5 413 100	15 352 400
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Year	Staff	Other expenditure	Total
2014	9 794 300	5 413 100	15 207 400
2015	9 744 300	5 333 100	15 077 400

11. Finally, although the financial situation is difficult, the Assembly wishes the work to modernise the Assembly Chamber to be continued in the coming years, depending on the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan. The modernisation should concern, in particular, installing a new voting system, refurbishing the presidential rostrum and changing the seats.

## Appendix 2

### Functioning of the Assembly

Intervention logic	Performance indicators
<p><b>Expected result 1</b> The part-sessions are efficiently organised and executed in line with Assembly members' expectations.</p>	<p>At least 70% of registered speakers have been able to take the floor. Adopted texts are transmitted to organisations concerned within the specified deadlines.</p>
<p><b>Expected result 2</b> Committee meetings, hearings and conferences take place in conformity with members' decisions.</p>	<p>2014-2015: no more than 10 meetings per committee are held each year. The impact of texts adopted by the Assembly is monitored at national parliament level.</p>
<p><b>Expected result 3</b> Interparliamentary co-operation, observation of elections and assistance to parliaments are managed according to political events.</p>	<p>Proposed co-operation programmes are drawn up which are designed to meet the specific needs of parliaments and attract voluntary contributions. Election observation missions are organised in accordance with decisions of the Bureau of the Assembly.</p>
<p><b>Expected result 4</b> The visibility of the Assembly is improved in the different member States.</p>	<p>Activities of the Assembly are reflected in the media, with at least 10 000 articles every year in print media worldwide. 2% increase in the number of external users of the Assembly's website.</p>

## B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Salles, rapporteur

### 1. Overview of the expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly

1. This report gives a complete overview of the Assembly's expenditure for the budget years 2014 and 2015. The Parliamentary Assembly's expenditure is included in the "Democracy" chapter of the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe. This covers all costs inherent in the Assembly's functioning, including expenditure on staff and costs associated with the functioning of the political groups. The budgetary appropriation does not, however, cover landline telephone bills, office supplies and equipment or other consumables, which are items of expenditure common to all departments within the Organisation.

2. The proposals regarding the amount to be allocated to the Assembly for 2014 and 2015 have been made in accordance with the decision by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Ministers to draw up the budget and programme of the Council of Europe on a biennial basis for 2014 and 2015.

3. The functioning of the Assembly covers the following range of tasks:

- holding of the ordinary session divided into four part-sessions (taking place in January, April, June and September/October of each year);
- meetings of the Standing Committee between the part-sessions, held at a frequency of three meetings per year;
- meetings, at times other than the four part-sessions of the Assembly, of each of the eight general committees, the sub-committees, the ad hoc committees of the Assembly or of the Bureau and specialised working parties;
- committee or sub-committee meetings outside Strasbourg or Paris;
- conferences, colloquies, seminars and parliamentary hearings;
- activities coming under the Assembly's programme of interparliamentary co-operation;
- visits by rapporteurs in the framework of the preparation of reports, including to countries subject to monitoring of the honouring of member States' obligations and commitments or to post-monitoring dialogue;
- election observation.

4. In view of the adverse economic climate, the Council of Europe member States have decided to apply zero nominal growth (not including inflation) for 2014 and 2015. This decision has led the Secretary General to ask all the administrative entities of the Council of Europe to make significant efforts to reduce their expenditure in order to be able to cover certain compulsory adjustments related to the payment of seniority-based increments to staff and various allowance (child allowance, education allowance) and the outstanding cost resulting from the salary adjustment for 2013. In the case of the Assembly, this translates to a sum of €275 000, equivalent to 1.8% of its budget for 2013. In these circumstances, the Assembly believes that maximum flexibility must be ensured in budget management for 2014-2015 and would like any unspent appropriations for 2014 to be carried forward to 2015.

5. It should further be noted that the Assembly has made substantial savings in recent years by rationalising its work in an effort to reduce its operational expenditure. Thus the proportion of the budget of the Assembly in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe has decreased steadily since 2005 (in 2005, the Assembly's budget accounted for 7.8% of the ordinary budget and for the biennium 2012-2013 this share fell to 6.8% of the ordinary budget).

6. To sum up, the draft budget for 2014 and 2015 (see appendix for details of expenditure) in real terms (not including salary adjustments), and excluding pension costs for staff, amounts to:

- **2014:** €15 207 400
- **2015:** €15 077 400

7. The appropriations can be analysed as follows:

2014		2015
€9 794 300	Permanent and temporary staff	€9 744 300

<b>2014</b>		<b>2015</b>
€p.m	Contribution to the pension budget	€p.m.
€1 786 600	Interpretation	€1 766 600
€627 500	Translation	€597 500
€280 400	Printing of documents	€280 400
€740 000	Allocation to the political groups	€740 000
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€13 228 800	Sub-total	€13 128 800
€1 978 600	Activities	€1 948 600
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€15 207 400	Total	€15 077 400

8. The reduction in the Assembly's funds will lead it to make further changes to its working methods, procedures and structure so as to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of its activities.

9. Lastly, although the financial situation is difficult, the Assembly wishes the work to modernise the Assembly Chamber to be continued in the coming years, depending on the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan. The modernisation should concern, in particular, installing a new voting system, refurbishing the presidential rostrum and changing the seats.

## Appendix – Expenditure of the Assembly

Parliamentary democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly Démocratie parlementaire – Dépenses relatives à l'Assemblée	Appropriations for 2013 Crédits inscrits au budget de 2013 EUROS	Appropriations for 2014 Crédits demandés au budget de 2014 EUROS	Appropriations for 2015 Crédits demandés au budget de 2015 EUROS
<b>HEAD 0310 – Functioning of the Assembly</b>			
<b>CHAPITRE 0310 – Fonctionnement de l'Assemblée</b>			
<b>Dépenses de personnel/Staff expenditure</b>			
0000001 - Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts <i>Rémunération du personnel recruté dans le cadre des emplois permanents</i>	8 718 500 €	8 573 500 €	8 523 500 €
0000003 - Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary staff <i>Rémunération et charges accessoires du personnel temporaire</i>	496 300 €	496 300 €	496 300 €
0000046 - Remuneration of staff on positions <i>Rémunération du personnel sur fonctions à durée déterminée</i>	440 700 €	440 700 €	440 700 €
0000005 - Salary, allowances and social charges of the Secretary General of the Assembly <i>Rémunération, indemnités et charges sociales du Secrétaire général de l'Assemblée</i>	256 300 €	256 300 €	256 300 €
0000016 - Recruitment, arrival and departure expenses – Home leave <i>Frais de recrutement à l'arrivée et au départ – congé dans le pays d'origine</i>	27 500 €	27 500 €	27 500 €
0000379 – Contribution to the Pension budget <i>Contribution au budget des pensions</i>	p.m. €	p.m. €	p.m. €
<b>Total Staff expenditure</b>	<b>9 939 300 €</b>	<b>9 794 300 €</b>	<b>9 744 300 €</b>
<b>Total Dépenses de personnel</b>			
<b>Supplies, services and other operational expenditure</b>			
<b>Dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement</b>			
<b>Sub-heads/Articles (article 0000299)</b>			
Equipment <i>Équipement</i>	11 000 €	11 000 €	11 000 €
Official journeys <i>Frais de missions</i>	243 600 €	243 600 €	243 600 €
Expenses linked to part-sessions <i>Dépenses liées aux parties de session</i>	365 700 €	365 700 €	365 700 €
Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly <i>Dépenses de représentation, frais de fonction et déplacement des membres de l'Assemblée</i>	163 200 €	163 200 €	163 200 €
Prepress <i>Pré-presse</i>	43 000 €	43 000 €	43 000 €
Interpretation <i>Interprétation</i>	1 786 600 €	1 786 600 €	1 766 600 €
Translation <i>Traduction</i>	627 500 €	627 500 €	597 500 €
Publishing and printing <i>Publications et impressions</i>	280 400 €	280 400 €	280 400 €
Outsourced production of documents <i>Production externalisée de documents</i>	25 000 €	25 000 €	25 000 €

<b>Parliamentary democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly Démocratie parlementaire – Dépenses relatives à l'Assemblée</b>	<b>Appropriations for 2013 Crédits inscrits au budget de 2013 EUROS</b>	<b>Appropriations for 2014 Crédits demandés au budget de 2014 EUROS</b>	<b>Appropriations for 2015 Crédits demandés au budget de 2015 EUROS</b>
Consultation of experts <i>Consultation d'experts</i>	45 600 €	45 600 €	45 600 €
Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly <i>Dépenses du Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée</i>	62 900 €	62 900 €	62 900 €
Official expenses of the President of the Assembly <i>Frais de fonction du Président de l'Assemblée</i>	94 400 €	94 400 €	94 400 €
Organisation of ad hoc conferences <i>Organisation de conférences ad hoc</i>	106 200 €	106 200 €	106 200 €
Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment <i>Modernisation de l'équipement de l'Assemblée</i>	78 400 €	78 400 €	78 400 €
European prizes <i>Prix européens</i>	81 600 €	81 600 €	81 600 €
Operating and maintenance costs of the electronic voting system <i>Coûts de maintenance et d'exploitation du vote électronique</i>	39 000 €	39 000 €	39 000 €
Co-operation and monitoring programme <i>Programme de coopération et du suivi des engagements</i>	563 900 €	563 900 €	533 900 €
Allocation to Assembly's political groups <i>Dotation des groupes politiques de l'Assemblée</i>	740 000 €	740 000 €	740 000 €
Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote <i>Autres dépenses non spécialement prévues au présent titre</i>	54 100 €	54 100 €	54 100 €
<b>Total supplies, services and other operational expenditure Total dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement</b>	<b>5 413 100 €</b>	<b>5 413 100 €</b>	<b>5 533 100</b>
<b>TOTAL Parliamentary Assembly TOTAL Assemblée Parlementaire</b>	<b>15 352 400 €</b>	<b>15 207 400 €</b>	<b>15 077 400 €</b>