Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1935 (2013)[1]
Final version

Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2014-2015

Parliamentary Assembly

1. In pursuance of Committee of Ministers Resolution (53) 38 on the budgetary system of the Consultative Assembly 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 has been presenting 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 considers, 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).

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 31 May 2013 (see Doc. 13205, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Salles).

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 secretariats of the committees. 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, in 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.

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 and Twitter, or the collaborative website 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). However, it does not wish to see its budget for 2014 and 2015 reduced any further.

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. The Assembly 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 – Expenditure of the Assembly

Vote III: 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 (the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and the Monitoring Committee) have 89 members (the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy also has 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 comprises 87 permanent posts, 6 positions and 1 specially appointed official, broken down as follows:

Permanent posts		
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	
Positions		
4 A2/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

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.).

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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:

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
For information, the budget for 2013			
2013	9 939 300	5 413 100	15 352 400

7. 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
Expected result 1 The part-sessions are efficiently organised and executed in line with Assembly members' expectations.	At least 70% of registered speakers have been able to take the floor. Adopted texts are transmitted to organisations concerned within the specified deadlines.
Expected result 2 Committee meetings, hearings and conferences take place in conformity with members' decisions.	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.
Expected result 3 Interparliamentary co-operation, observation of elections and assistance to national parliaments are managed according to political events.	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.
Expected result 4 The visibility of the Assembly is improved in the different member States.	Activities of the Assembly are reflected in the media, with at least 10 000 articles every year in print media worldwide. A 2% increase in the number of external users of the Assembly's website.