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Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2020-2021

Report[1]
Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs
Rapporteur: Mr Mart van de VEN, Netherlands, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Summary

For the 2020-2021 biennium, the Parliamentary Assembly, despite the uncertainties over the Organisation's budget, should continue to be the political driving force of the Council of Europe, in particular by addressing the challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy, both at national and regional level, as well as to the societal developments facing its member States.

The Assembly will encourage the efficient implementation at national level of the Council of Europe's main standards and conventions. It will focus on the three pillars of the Council of Europe's work programme, and on the implementation of the various multi-annual transversal strategies decided by the Council of Europe, bearing in mind the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision, Reference 4433 of 1 March 2019.

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A. Draft resolution[2]

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 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, including the functioning of its political groups. Since 2010, the Assembly has presented the opinion concerning its own expenditure in the form of a resolution.

2. The preparation of the Assembly's opinion on the budget and priorities of the Council of Europe and of the resolution on its own expenditure for the biennium 2020-2021 is taking place in a strange context. The Assembly is required to comment on Council of Europe priorities on the basis of the participation of the 47 member States in the Council of Europe's budget, whereas the reality of the situation should lead us to present an opinion based on the actual situation facing the Council of Europe, in other words without the funding from one of the five major contributors, namely the Russian Federation. The Assembly recalls that the Council of Europe is an international organisation of a political nature, without an economic or gainful aim, set up by sovereign States which relies on contributions by its member States for its funding.

3. The Assembly is aware of the challenges of the budget for the next biennium, given the uncertainty surrounding the Russian Federation's non-payment of its contributions to the Council of Europe's budgets, and has taken note of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe's contingency plan of a €32.4 million reduction for the ordinary budget spread over a three-year period starting in the second half of 2019. In this context, the Assembly has been asked to proceed with a reduction at the level of 15% of its budget.

4. The Assembly points out that, at the meeting between the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and its Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs in January 2019, the General Rapporteur on the Budget made a proposal on identifying alternatives to a reduction in the budget, in particular the assignment of debt to a third party, a proposal which the Assembly's Presidential Committee supported at its meeting on 24 January 2019.

5. Before agreeing to any other cuts in its budget, the Assembly therefore calls for all alternative options, including the assignment of debt to a third party, to be studied seriously by the Secretary General and the Committee of Ministers.

6. Having made these preemptive comments, the Assembly refers to its Resolution 2277 (2019) "Role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly: main challenges for the future" and recalls that it must continue to be the political driving force of the Council of Europe, notably by addressing challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy, both at national and at regional level, as well as the societal challenges faced by its member States. As a forum for sharing best practices and experience, the Assembly provides national parliaments and States with the support and guidance they need to ensure well-functioning democracies and respect for the rule of law.

7. The Assembly's action ties in with the three pillars of the Council of Europe's Programme and Budget, namely human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Its work will contribute to the implementation of various cross-sectoral multi-annual strategies adopted by the Council of Europe (in particular in the areas of children's rights, gender equality and internet governance) and, where appropriate, the Assembly may propose new standards in new areas or on emerging issues such as new technologies, digitisation and artificial intelligence.

8. The Assembly supports the efficient implementation at national level of Council of Europe standards and conventions and of the conclusions of the various monitoring bodies and mechanisms, in particular regarding the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) and the role of national parliaments as guarantors of human rights in Europe.

9. The Assembly also encourages parliamentary involvement in the promotion and implementation of other key Council of Europe instruments by which it sets great store, namely the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention"), the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, "Lanzarote Convention") and the Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (CETS No. 211, "Medicrime Convention").

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 3 June 2019.

10. The Assembly, referring to its Resolution 2271 (2019) and Recommendation 2150 (2019) on strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, considers that various aspects of its work contribute towards the achievement of this Agenda and will help member States to assess progress when preparing their national reviews. In the context of the biennium 2020-2021, special effort will be made to increase parliamentary involvement in this process, to translate the Sustainable Development Goals into national action and raise the electorate's awareness about the impact they have on their daily lives.

11. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming will be key aspects of all Assembly policies and activities, as provided for in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023. There will be a special focus on eliminating violence against women, and the Assembly will continue its activities aimed at promoting and protecting children's rights, promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination on all grounds.

12. In the area of election observation, the Assembly will continue to observe parliamentary and presidential elections in countries under its monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue procedures, in close co-operation with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). Special attention will be devoted to dispute-resolution procedures and the funding of political parties and election campaigns, as well as the abuse of public resources for the benefit of ruling parties.

13. The fight against corruption and money laundering will remain on the agenda of the committees, bearing in mind the implementation of the recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) following the report by the Independent Investigation Body on the allegations of corruption within the Assembly (IBAC).

14. In the area of inter-parliamentary co-operation, the Assembly will continue implementing various assistance and co-operation programmes suited to the needs of parliamentary institutions, in close co-operation with the committee secretariats. It will continue to hold multilateral seminars for parliamentarians and parliamentary committee staff on supervision of the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

15. Other co-operation activities will be carried out concerning, for instance, the parliamentary dimension of European Union/Council of Europe joint programmes: phase three of the South Programme (SPIII), which will end in 2020, and the inter-parliamentary co-operation programme in Morocco (2018-2021). The Assembly will continue its work in connection with the action plan drawn up for Ukraine and the component on strengthening parliamentary capacity to implement Council of Europe standards and policies in Ukraine (Phase II) and also the plan for Georgia, subject to available resources.

16. The Assembly will continue its policy of seeking financial resources from governments and parliaments with a view to implementing in 2020-2021 its programme, "Promoting European and international standards through parliamentary action" with a particular focus on public health, empowering and protecting children, women's right to live free from violence and the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance.

17. In this connection, the Assembly wishes to express its sincere appreciation to those member States and their parliaments (in particular Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Switzerland) which, through their contributions, have enabled it (during the biennium 2018-2019) to finance Assembly activities, and to the Czech Government, the Václav Havel Library and the Charter 77 Foundation, which contribute generously to the outreach and prestige of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.

18. In the coming biennium, the Assembly will continue to carry out the activities provided for in its Rules of Procedure by holding various elections in accordance with statutory and convention requirements (Deputy Secretary General, Secretary General of the Assembly, Judges of the European Court of Human Rights) and promoting the various European distinctions it awards (Europe Prize, Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, Museum Prize).

19. In terms of external communication and visibility, the Assembly will enrich its website and enable parliamentarians and all other users to download the video recordings of debates during plenary sessions. The Assembly will also continue to develop new tools and content for its accounts on Facebook (five separate pages) and Twitter (six accounts), as well as audiovisual activities such as the television magazine, "The Session", its own YouTube channel and a new weekly activities e-newsletter for members.

20. Regarding the efforts requested in the Assembly, it is worth noting that a 15% reduction in the Assembly's budget compared to the appropriations foreseen in 2019 represents a cut of some €2.2 million (including €1.4 million on staff expenditure). It should be noted that redundancy payments for the early departure of staff are not included in the contingency plan, except for an amount set aside for this purpose in the framework of the Programme and Budget 2018-2019.

21. The implementation of the contingency plan means the freezing of permanent posts in the Assembly's Secretariat (with the 15% scenario) and a substantial reduction of appropriations to employ temporary staff.

22. The required savings in the operational activities budget for the year 2020-2021 might have to be identified through:

– a possible change of the method of preparation of verbatim reports of plenary sessions;

– the possible suppression of Russian as a working language of the Assembly (in line with Rule 28.3 of the Rules of Procedure);

– possible further reductions in interpretation in working languages provided in committees;

– the possible reorganisation of plenary sessions of the Assembly (less days of plenary sittings of the Assembly per year).

23. For several years the Assembly has contributed to the efforts called for to remain within a zero nominal growth budget. In 2018, the Assembly reduced its expenditure by €1.5 million following Turkey's decision to discontinue its major contributor status. During the last ten years, the share of the Assembly's budget in the Council of Europe's Ordinary Budget decreased from 7.2% in 2009 to 6.5% in 2019 and the number of posts in the Assembly Secretariat decreased from 94 in 2009 to 84 in 2019.

24. The Assembly reiterates its call on member States to return to zero real growth, that is to say at least to include inflation in their contributions, so as to stabilise the Organisation's resources and thereby enable the Council of Europe to continue to fulfil its mandate for member States.

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 and of temporary staff.

2. The information provided here is based on the current structure of the Assembly comprising nine committees. As at 1 May 2019, the secretariat comprised 84 permanent posts and positions, one specially appointed official (Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly), broken down as follows:

Permanent posts	
2 A6	1 B6
7 A5	5 B5
9 A4	10 B4
23 A2/A3	17 B3
	6 B2
Positions	
3 A2/A3	1 B3

3. At present, the secretariat of the Assembly is organised so that the nine Assembly committees have 46 staff working for them (comprising 29 A-grade and 17 B-grade permanent staff members).

4. The remaining 38 staff members 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.

5. Since 2009, due to the zero-growth policy in nominal terms and following Turkey's decision in 2018 to discontinue its major contributor status, the Assembly has reduced by 10 the number of its posts or positions.

6. Within the contingency plan, out of a current total of 84 permanent posts and positions (44 A and 40 B), several would have to be frozen already in 2019 (see the tables below):

Number of posts to be frozen – Scenario 15% budgetary cuts					
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**TOTAL**
Compulsory retirements	1	-	3	3	7
Other posts	2	4	2	-	8
TOTAL	3	4	5	3	15

Supplies, services and other operational expenditure

7. In recent years, the Assembly has made substantial savings by rationalising its work to reduce its operational expenditure. In particular in 2018, following Turkey’s decision to discontinue its major contributor status, the Assembly had to cut its budget by 9.47%, which led to the ending of the use of Turkish as a working language at the Assembly, as the funding for it was no longer available.

8. 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 of the Bureau and the Presidential Committee;

– meetings, during and outside the four part-sessions of the Assembly, for each of the nine general committees, the sub-committees, the ad hoc committees of the Assembly and the Bureau;

– conferences, colloquies, seminars and parliamentary hearings;

– activities coming under the Assembly’s programme of inter-parliamentary co-operation;

– visits by rapporteurs in connection with the preparation of reports, including to countries subject to monitoring of the honouring of member States' obligations and commitments or to the post-monitoring dialogue;

– election observation.

9. In 2020-2021, the Assembly will continue to carry out its priority tasks and pursue its objectives in accordance with its Resolution 2277 (2019) "Role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly: main challenges for the future», namely:

– continuing to be the political driving force of the Council of Europe, notably by addressing challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy, both at national and at regional level, while giving priority to measures to ensure well-functioning democracies and respect for the rule of law;

– supporting the efficient implementation of several groundbreaking Council of Europe standards at national level, through public awareness-raising;

– ensuring parliamentary involvement in the promotion and implementation of key Council of Europe instruments, in particular the Istanbul Convention, the Lanzarote Convention and the Medicrime Convention;

– contributing towards the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

– contributing to the implementation of various cross-sectoral multi-annual Council of Europe strategies (in particular in the areas of children's rights, equality between women and men and internet governance);

– taking part in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023, including within the Assembly, with a special focus on human rights and the gender dimension as well as on eliminating violence against women;

– helping national parliaments to check the conformity of legislation with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) more effectively and strengthen their ability to monitor the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

10. In addition, the Assembly will continue over the forthcoming biennium to seek financing for specific major projects to be carried out by some of its committees:

– promoting public health through parliamentary action and empowering and protecting children through parliamentary action;

– the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence;

– the No Hate Alliance and its five priority themes: hate speech, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Gypsyism and homophobia and transphobia.

11. With regard to the other co-operation activities, the Assembly will continue its awareness-raising work among parliaments concerning their role in supervising the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and its specific co-operation activities in connection with the parliamentary dimension of several European Union–Council of Europe joint programmes such as phase three of the South Programme (SPIII), which is due to end in 2020, the inter-parliamentary co-operation programme for Morocco (2018-2021) and the action plans for Georgia and Ukraine.

12. Regarding the electoral process, the Assembly will continue to observe parliamentary and presidential elections in countries under its monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue procedures, in close co-operation with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). Special attention will be devoted to dispute-resolution procedures and the funding of political parties and election campaigns, as well as the abuse of public resources for the benefit of ruling parties.

13. Lastly, 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.

14. To sum up, the draft budget for 2020 and 2021 is the same as the budget approved by the Committee of Ministers for 2019 (*it does not take account of the three-year contingency plan for the ordinary budget which might take effect on 1 July 2019*). It amounts to:

Year	Staff[3]	Other expenditure	Total
2020	€9,690,900	€4,987,900	€14,678,800
2021	€9,690,900	€4,987,900	€14,678,800

9. If the contingency plan were to be implemented, the requested reduction on the budget of the Assembly will be the following for the years from 2019 to 2022.

15% reduction

Year	Staff	Other expenditure	Total
2019	-€214,800	-€118,800	-€333,600
2020	-€504,100	-€278,900	-€783,000
2021	-€388,700	-€394,400	-€783,100
2022	-€324,200		-€324 200
TOTAL	-€1,431,800	-€792,100	-€2,223,900

3. Based on the 2019 budget (excluding pension contributions).

Appendix 2 – Functioning of the Assembly

Intervention logic	Performance indicators
Expected result 1 – Sessions/committees The part-sessions, committee meetings, hearings and conferences were organised by an efficient secretariat in line with members' expectations.	Percentage of registered speakers able to take the floor (target: 70%). Number of meetings per committee held each year. Number of conferences and hearings organised with committee meetings. Degree of satisfaction of parliamentarians about the assistance provided before, during and after part-sessions and committee meetings.
Expected result 2 – Co-operation Parliaments of relevant member States have benefited from inter-parliamentary co-operation programmes implemented to respond to specific needs and priorities of the Council of Europe and national parliaments.	Number of co-operation programmes drawn up. Evidence of the quality and relevance of organised activities.
Expected result 3 – Election observation The Assembly and parliaments of relevant member States have received observation reports which evaluate parliamentary or presidential elections and include targeted recommendations.	Number of election observation mission reports submitted to the Assembly. Evidence of improvement (change in national law and practices) following previous visits.
Expected result 4 – Communication and visibility Public opinion in member States has been informed of the activities of the Assembly and of its members through traditional and social media.	Number of articles published in print media in which activities of the Assembly are reflected. Percentage increase in the number of external users of the Assembly's website. Number of interviews via Media box.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Mart van de Ven, rapporteur

1. This report gives a comprehensive overview of the Parliamentary Assembly's expenditure for the budget years 2020 and 2021. The 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 telephone bills, office supplies and equipment or other consumables, which are items of expenditure common to all departments within the Organisation.

2. The proposals for the Assembly's appropriations for the biennium 2020 and 2021 have been based on the 2018 budget as revised following Turkey's discontinuation of its major contributor status and on a budget adopted by the 47 member States (including the Russian Federation). This report does not take account of the reductions in the Assembly's budget stemming from the contingency plan proposed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in the event of non-payment by the Russian Federation of its outstanding contributions and its contribution for 2019.

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 of the Bureau and the Presidential Committee;

– meetings, during and outside the four part-sessions of the Assembly, for each of the nine general committees, the sub-committees, the ad hoc committees of the Assembly and the Bureau;

– conferences, colloquies, seminars and parliamentary hearings;

– activities coming under the Assembly's programme of inter-parliamentary co-operation;

– visits by rapporteurs in connection with the preparation of reports, including to countries subject to monitoring of the honouring of member States' obligations and commitments or to the post-monitoring dialogue;

– election observation.

4. During the biennium 2020-2021, priority will be given to the following objectives as part of the Assembly's overall remit as defined in its Resolution 2277 (2019) "Role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly: main challenges for the future":

– continuing to be the political driving force of the Council of Europe, notably by addressing challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy, both at national and at regional level, while giving priority to measures to ensure well-functioning democracies and respect for the rule of law;

– strengthening its political relevance and focusing more on issues where it can add value or stand out from other bodies;

– improving Assembly members' engagement, while reinforcing interaction between the Assembly and national parliaments and responding effectively to proposals made by them;

– helping national parliaments to check the conformity of legislation with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) more effectively and strengthen their ability to monitor the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights;

– contributing to the implementation of various cross-sectoral multi-annual Council of Europe strategies (in particular in the areas of children's rights, equality between women and men and internet governance);

– strengthening inter-parliamentary co-operation throughout Europe, including co-operation with national parliaments holding partner for democracy status and with the European Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

5. It is vital for the Assembly to continue to be the Council of Europe's political driving force, notably by addressing challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy, both at national and at regional level. To that end, it must strive to provide national parliaments and States with the support and guidance they need to ensure well-functioning democracies and respect for the rule of law.

6. In addition, as a forum for sharing best practices and experience, the Assembly is the place where new standards are drawn up in emerging fields. Its role is therefore also to support the efficient implementation of various groundbreaking Council of Europe standards at national level, in particular by raising parliamentary and public awareness.

7. In this regard, it must continue to help national parliaments to check the conformity of legislation with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights more effectively and strengthen their ability to monitor the execution of the judgments of the Strasbourg Court.

8. It will also have to ensure that national parliaments play a full part in the promotion and implementation of other key Council of Europe instruments by which the Assembly sets great store, including the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention"), the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, "Lanzarote Convention") and the Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (CETS No. 211, "Medicrime Convention").

9. In general, the Assembly's activities will have to contribute towards the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to which the Assembly committed itself when adopting Resolution 2271 (2019) and Recommendation 2150 (2019). Special effort will be made to increase parliamentary involvement in this process, so as to translate the Sustainable Development Goals into national action and raise the electorate's awareness about the impact they have on their daily lives.

10. The Assembly's activities will also have to contribute to the implementation of various cross-sectoral multi-annual Council of Europe strategies, as provided for in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023, for instance, including within the Assembly and with a special focus on eliminating violence against women and applying a human rights and gender-sensitive approach.

11. Lastly, the Assembly must enhance the support it provides to member States by drawing on the conclusions of the various monitoring bodies and mechanisms. It will continue to observe parliamentary and presidential elections in countries under its monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue procedures, in close co-operation with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), while devoting special attention to dispute-resolution procedures and the funding of political parties and election campaigns, as well as the abuse of public resources for the benefit of ruling parties.

12. The fight against corruption and money laundering will remain on the agenda of the committees, and the Assembly will have to continue its work concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) following the report by the Independent Investigation Body on the allegations of corruption within the Assembly (IBAC).

13. Of course, the Assembly must continue to review and update its practices and working methods and efforts will have to be made to step up co-ordination on an internal level and with the other sectors of the Council of Europe. In complicated budgetary circumstances, it must focus its activities more than ever on those areas where it adds value and that address the interests and needs of its members.

14. Since 2014, the Committee of Ministers has imposed zero nominal growth on the Council of Europe. The Russian Federation's failure to honour its financial obligations to the Council of Europe is now posing a significant threat to the Organisation. For 2017 and 2018, the Secretary General chose to maintain the level of expenditure approved by the Committee of Ministers (based on 47 member States) by making use of the Organisation's general cash flow.[4]

15. This policy cannot be continued beyond the first half of 2019. The Secretary General has therefore chosen to present a contingency plan to bring the Organisation's expenditure budget into line with its actual revenues, i.e. an overall budget that does not include the obligatory contributions of the Russian Federation. This plan is due to take effect from the second half of 2019 and be spread over three years so as to soften the impact of the cuts. It will also deal with Russia's unpaid contributions for the period from 2017 to 2019 so as to restore the Organisation's cash balance over a seven- to nine-year period.

4. The Organisation's general cash flow is essentially made up of obligatory contributions, extra-budgetary resources, miscellaneous receipts and other income and EDQM operating revenues.

16. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe outlined the plan to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs in January 2019 (during the Assembly's part-session). At the meeting, the General Rapporteur on the Budget also took the opportunity to raise the question with the Secretary General of possible alternatives to the plan and propose that consideration be given to the possibility of the assignment of the Russian debt to a third party.[5]

17. The chairs of the political groups support this idea and it is unfortunate that the Secretary General has not sought to consider it in greater depth. But it is still possible that the implementation of the contingency plan may not happen. Indeed, as a follow-up to the decision adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at its 129th session (Helsinki, 17 May 2019) on "A shared responsibility for democratic security in Europe – Ensuring respect for rights and obligations, principles, standards and values", the Assembly may propose an ad hoc solution allowing the Russian Federation to decide or not to return to the Assembly and therefore pay its contributions.

18. Lastly, it should be pointed out that since 2009, the Assembly has made substantial savings in staff expenditure with the abolition of 10 posts or positions and part of the appropriations for temporary staff. The implementation of the contingency plan would lead to a further reduction of posts (15 posts with the 15% scenario).

19. To sum up, the draft budget for 2020 and 2021 (see appendix for details of expenditure) in real terms amounts to:

– **2020**: €14 678 800 (€15 930 300 including contributions to the pension budget)

– **2021**: €14 678 800 (€15 930 300 including contributions to the pension budget)

The appropriations can be analysed as follows:

2020		2021
€9 690 900	Permanent and temporary staff*	€9 690 900
€4 247 900	Activities	€4 247 900
€740 000	Allocation to the political groups	€740 000
€14 678 800	Total	€14 678 800

* including appropriations for a specially appointed official and a seconded civil servant

(For the record, the initial appropriations for 2018-2019 before the reduction in the Turkish contribution were €16 189 700)

20. In the event of a reduction in its staff-related and operational appropriations, the Assembly will be obliged to make further changes to its working methods, procedures and structure in order to sustain the relevance and effectiveness of its activities.

21. If the contingency plan were to be implemented, the requested reduction in the budget of the Assembly will be the following for the years from 2019 to 2022.

15% reduction (excluding pension contributions)

Year	Staff	Other expenditure[6]	Total
2019	-€214,800	-€118,800	-€333,600
2020	-€504,100	-€278,900	-€783,000
2021	-€388,700	-€394,400	-€783,000
2022	-€324,200	€ 0	-€324 200

22. To conclude and due to the current volatile political environment and related uncertainties, the report does not and cannot consider consequences for the activities, operations, sustainability and future of the Council of Europe in the event that the contingency plan needs to be executed.

5. This possibility exists and has already been used by various countries and there is a 2001 United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade.

6. Activities and allocation to the political groups remain at €740 000 each year

Appendix – Expenditure of the Assembly

Parliamentary Democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly	Appropriations for 2020 €	Appropriations for 2021 €
Functioning of the Assembly		
Staff expenditure		
Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts	8 366 600	8 366 600
Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary staff	570 700	570 700
Remuneration of staff on position	432 500	432 500
Salary, allowances and social charges of the Secretary General of the Assembly	257 600	257 600
Placement of national civil servants on secondment	36 000	36 000
Arrival and departure expenses – Home leave	27 500	27 500
Contribution to the Pension budget	1 251 500	1 251 500
Total Staff Expenditure	**10 942 400**	**10 942 400**
Supplies, services and other operational expenditure		
General operational expenditure		
Equipment – telecommunication costs	15 000	15 000
Official journeys	292 800	292 800
Representational expenditure, other official travelling expenses of members of the Assembly	150 000	150 000
Prepress	25 000	25 000
Interpretation	609 500	609 500
Translation	455 800	455 800
Publishing and printing	187 000	187 000
Outsourced production of documents	5 000	5 000
Fees for expertise	29 200	29 200
Organisation of ad hoc conferences	115 200	115 200
Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment	85 000	85 000
Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote	11 000	11 000
Expenses linked to the session		
Expenses linked to part-sessions	241 500	241 500
Interpretation linked to part-sessions	1 309 000	1 309 000
Operating and maintenance costs of the electronic voting system	32 400	32 400
Expenditure of the Presidency		
Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	76 800	76 800
Official expenses of the President of the Assembly	72 000	72 000
Political Groups		
Allocation to Assembly's political groups	740 000	740 000
European Prizes		
European prizes expenditure	109 000	109 000
Co-operation		
Co-operation activities	156 000	156 000
Official journeys	20 400	20 400
Interpretation	15 100	15 100
Observation of elections		
Observations of elections	114 300	114 300
Interpretation	21 700	21 700
Official journeys	60 300	60 300
Communication expenses		

Parliamentary Democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly	Appropriations for 2020 €	Appropriations for 2021 €
Translation	24 200	24 200
Official journeys	14 700	14 700
Total supplies, services and other operational expenditure	**4 987 900**	**4 987 900**
TOTAL Parliamentary Assembly	**15 930 300**	**15 930 300**