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Opinion of the Assembly on the Budget for 1957

Report[1]
Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme
Rapporteur: Mr Jacques BICHET, France

A. Draft Opinion

The Assembly,

Having regard to Vote II of the draft Budget for 1957 (Expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly), transmitted to the Assembly by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe;

Having regard to the letter of 8th February, 1956, by which the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe transmitted to the President of the Assembly the Budget of the Council of Europe for the Financial Year 1956, as adopted by the Committee of Ministers, together with the General Accounts for the Financial Year 1954, this being the latest period for which final accounts are available;

Having regard to Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers,

Adopts the following Opinion :

1. Concerning Vote II of the Budget for 1957 (Expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly)

The appropriations under Vote II should be computed as follows :

Sub-Heads (a) to (h) : as proposed by the Secretary-General :

Sub-Head (i) Representationalexpenses 3,000,000 frs.

Lump sum entertainmentallowance to thePresident - 1.500.000 francs

to cover representationalexpenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents and by Chairmen and Rapporteurs of Committees - 1.500.000 francs

Sub-Head (j) : Reimbursementof certain functionalexpenses - 3.500.000 francs

working expenses of the President's Private Office. - 1.500.000 francs

Other functional expenses -2.000.000 francs

Sub-Head (k) : Official journeys of staff of the Secretariat-General :Estimate for 1957 -6.500.000 francs

Sub-Head (L) : Travellingexpenses, fees and allowancesof experts : Estimate for1957 - 3.000.000francs

Sub-Head (m) : as proposed by the Secretary- General.

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2. Concerning proposals for inclusion in other Heads of the Budget for 1957

1. The estimate under Sub-Head 41— Cost of the Cultural Programme—is to be increased to 30,000,000 frs. for the Financial Year 1957.

2. In order to provide the Secretariat-General with adequate resources for furthering the propagation of the European idea in member countries, the appropriations under Head VIII of the Council of Europe Budget for 1957 should be as scheduled follows :—• Sub-Head 42 : Remuneration and allowances of nationalcorrespondents of the Directorate of Information20,400,000 frs.Sub-Head 44 : InformationProgramme 31,100,000 frs.Sub-Head 45 : Production ofshort films 21,500,000 frs.Moreover, the strength of the permanentstaff in the Directorate of Information should be increased by three, for which purpose the relevant appropriations under Vote I would need to be increased by . . 5,500,000 frs.The appropriations under Sub-Head 20 " Official journeys " should be increasedby 1,500,000 frs.to cover the needs of the Directorate of fnformation.

3. Chapter X (Other functional expenditure)should be re-worded as follows : " Expenditurein the field of Municipal and Regional Affairs ", and should include the following Sub-Heads :(i) European Conference ofLocal Authorities 11,200,000 frs.The purpose of this sum would be to cover the costs (such as travelling expenses and subsistence allowances of participants and remuneration of temporary staff) of organising the European Conference of Local Authorities, which the Assembly decided to convene by its Resolution 76 (1955).(ii) European Prize :Estimate for1957 . . 1,250,000 frs.The purpose of this sum would be to award a cash prize of 1,000,000 frs. to the successfulmunicipality and to cover subsidiary expenses.(iii) Furthermore, in order to enable the scheme for exchanges of visits between members of European Local Authorities to be put into effect in accordance with Resolution 75 (1955), expenditureof 500,000 frs. should be charged to the appropriate Sub-Heads of the Budget, the estimatesfor which should be adjusted accordingly.

4. Since Vote II of the Budget does notcover all Assembly expenditure, the Assembly expresses the hope that, when, for instance, it receives the accounts for 1955, it will also be given an indication of the full cost of providing for it's maintenance.

Explanatory Memorandum submitted by M. BICHET, Rapporteur

Although the Consultative Assembly-has no formal right to approve the Budget of the Council of Europe, its opinion is sought on that part of the draft Budget (Vote II) which relates more particularly to expenditure connectedwith Sessions, as well as on the Budget as a whole adopted by the Committee of Ministersfor the current year.

Last year, therefore, the Assembly proceededon 9th July to adopt Opinion No. 16 (1955) on Vote II of the draft Budget for 1956 and, on 26th October, to adopt Recommendation 90 on the Budget of the Council of Europe.

It is now called upon to examine Vote II of the draft Budget for 1957 and the Budget for 1956 as a whole.

Last year, the Committee on Budgetary Affairs and Administration complained to the Assembly that inadequate information had been supplied to it by the Secretary-General, and paragraph 1 of Recommendation 90 requestedthat the Committee of Ministers " transmit to it documents and details of estimatesrelating to the whole Budget of the Council of Europe".

The Chairman and Rapporteur of the Committee were heard on this point by the Ministers' Deputies on 29th February, 1956.

The Committee is bound to record that in this respect due attention has been paid to the Assembly's Recommendation and that the documentation placed at its disposal has been more satisfactory.

This being the first time that the Committeehas received adequate information on the Council of Europe Budget, it feels that it would be useful to explain the salient facts to the Assembly, before giving reasons for the draft Opinion now submitted.

This will make it easier to relate the subsequent comments to their general context, and so make them more intelligible. The appendices[2] to this Report contain :

> *The Budget of the Council of Europe for the Financial Year 1956 as approved by the Committee of Ministers.*

2. The appendices have been printed separately andare obtainable on request.

The preliminary draft Budget for 1957 (Vote II - Expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly).

The Budget of the Council of Europe for the Financial Year 1956 shows expenditure and receipts of 824,200,000 frs

The main items of expenditure compare as follows with those for the previous Financial Year, further details being given in Appendix I :

Votes - 1955 - 1956

I. I. Expenditure of the Secretariat-General - 636.470.000 625.200.000

II. Expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly - 112.000.000 96.500.000

I I I. Functional expenditure - 60.650.000 65.450.000

IV. Expenditure in connection with the work of the Commissionand Court provided for in the Convention for the Protectionof Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms - 23.800.00024.100.000

V. Initial capital expenditure. - 21.650.00012.950.000- 854,570.000 824.200.000

The corresponding figures for receiptsare as follows : - 1995 - 1956

Contributions ofMember States - 836.720.000 805.250.000

Miscellaneous Receipts -17.850.000 18.950.000 - 854.570.000 824.200.000

The respective contributions of MemberStates also appear in Appendix I (page 9, paragraph 2).

However, the actual amount charged to Member States is less than the figure just mentioned, since the balance in hand from previous Financial Years is treated as an instalmenttowards their contributions.

The actual outlay was as follows :

1955 - 1956

Contributions - 836.720.000 - 805.250.000

Credit Balance from previous FinancialYears - 43.933.441 63.319.811 - 792.786.559.741.930.189

The Committee was informed of the method of drawing up estimates and was able to satisfy itself that the figures were, on the whole, reasonably accurate, having regard to the difficulties inherent in an international organisation. Perusal of the 1954 Accounts shows, moreover, that progress has been made in this respect compared with 1953, for credits cancelledin 1954 amounted to only 60,224,642 frs. (or 6.1 %) instead of 102,679,149 frs. (or 10.5 %). A considerable proportion of these cancellationsoccur in Vote II. (Expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly) (14,624,806 frs. or 16.45 %), the explanation being that the Session fell short of the thirty days provided for in the Statute.

The Assembly may therefore take the view that progress has been made in the directionmentioned in Recommendation 90, paragraph2, in which it was requested that " the expenditure of the Council of Europe be calculatedas accurately as possible ".

The preliminary draft Budget for 1957 as now submitted is confined to expenditure relating to the Assembly, namely Vote II of the Budget.

Estimates amount to 89,350,000 frs. as compared with 96,500,000 frs. in 1956, in other words hardly more than 10 % of the whole of the 1956 Budget.

Appendix II contains the detailed estimates prepared by the Secretary-General.

Haying placed in their general context the facts submitted to the Assembly for its opinion,the Committee puts forward a number of comments which it asks the Assembly to endorse.

The Committee notes first of all that Vote II, now before the Assembly in the form of a preliminary draft, covers only part of the expenditure connected with the work of the Assembly. In fact, it only contains expenditure directly resulting from the holding of Sessions or committee meetings, and this only insofar as they have been itemized.

Expenditure relating to the permanent establishment of the Office of the Clerk which accounts for a substantial part of expenditure on equipment (upkeep, heating, lighting, cleaning,telephone and postal charges, etc.) is included in Vote I of the Budget. Informationon expenditure appears under Vote III, although part of it results from the holding of Sessions, while initial capital expenditure (alterationsto premises, purchase of furniture and equipment) comes under Vote V. These items arc not completely outside the Assembly's purview, since it is now asked for an opinion on the Council of Europe's Budget as a whole. The fact remains, however, that, in these matters,it is only informed of appropriations for the current year and not of estimates for the coming year.

Though it refrains from requesting structural changes in the Budget, for this Avould have obvious practical drawbacks, the Committee does request that the Secretariat-General supply it, at the same time, for instance,as the 1955 accounts, with a report showingthe actual total expenditure resulting from the maintenance of the Assembly. Such a report would in itself enable the Assembly to express an authoritative opinion on the extent and deployment of the services placed at its disposal.

The detailed notes on the Sub-Heads call for the following remarks :

Sub-Head (a) - Remuneration of temporary staff

The Committee has been struck by the modest remuneration received by some of the executive staff and, in the interests of successful recruitment, requests that the possibility of increasing such remuneration should be considered.

Sub-Head (i) - Representational expenses

In its Opinion No. 16 (1955) the Assemblyrequested that the purpose of this Sub-Head be clarified and the corresponding appropriation fixed at 3,000,000 frs.

The Committee of Ministers accepted the Opinion of the Assembly so far as the title of the Sub-Head was concerned but maintained thé 1956 appropriation at the level originally proposed by the Secretary-General, namely 2,000,000 frs.

The justification for requesting 3,000,000 frs. was given by Mr. Smithers in a masterly statement to the Assembly and has since lost none of its cogency. On the contrary, some of the entertainment expenses borne in the past by the French Government will henceforthhave to be charged to the Budget of the Council of Europe. The Committee therefore proposes that the Assembly repeat its request of last year.

Furthermore the current procedure whereby expenses incurred by the President are reimbursed on the presentation of vouchers seems somewhat undignified. It is therefore proposed to renew the request that this appropriationbe increased to 3,000,000 frs., and to suggest that it be allocated as follows :

> *1,500,000frs. to cover the grant of a lump sum entertainment allowance to the President of the Assembly;*
>
> *1,500,000frs. for entertainment, travelling and similar representational expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and Chairmen and Rapporteurs of Committees*

Sub-Head (j) - Reimbursement of certain functionalexpenses

The estimate proposed by the Secretary-General is 2,500,000 frs. and is therefore a repetition of the appropriation for 1956, adopted in accordance with the Assembly's Opinion.

This sum is intended to cover various expenses incurred by members of the ConsultativeAssembly—-more especially the President—in the discharge of specific duties for the Council of Europe.

Since the establishment of the President'sPrivate Office at the Paris Office of the Council of Europe will result in additional expenses, it is proposed that this credit be increased to 3,500,000 frs., composed of the following items :

> *Working expenses of the President's Private Office (President'stravelling expenses, remunerationof secretary, allowancesand sundry costs) - 1.500.000 francs*
>
> *Reimbursement of various expenses incurred by members of the Consultative Assembly in the discharge of specific duties for the Council of Europe - 2.000.000 francs*

Sub-Head (k) - Official journeys of members of the Secretariat- General

Owing to a number of new tasks assumed by the Assembly, it is probable that the Committees, in accordance with the principleslaid down in paragraph 3 of the Resolution of the Standing Committee dated 10th February, 1955, will henceforth apply more frequently for permission to meet elsewhere than at Strasbourgor Paris. It will be impossible to accede to such requests if the present appropriations are maintained, and it is therefore desirable that they be increased from 5,500,000 to 6,500,000 frs.

Sub-Head (1) - Travelling expenses, fees and allowances of Experts

In its Recommendation 90 the Assemblyrequested that this sum be increased from 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 1rs. The Secretary-General did not feel justified in including this request in his budgetary proposals on account of the size of the sum involved. The Committee of Ministers examined the Assembly's proposal but decided not to act on it. Nevertheless, it agreed that any specific requests for the assistanceof experts which the Assembly might wish to make in the course of the year, and which could not be met out of this appropriation,would be examined with a view to granting supplementary credits.

As stated in the Opinion on the Special Message of the Committee of Ministers and in the report of the Committee on BudgetaryQuestions and Administration concerning Vote II of the 1956 Budget, Assembly Committeesintend to consult independent experts to an increasing extent when preparing certain of their Recommendations. This applies, for instance,to Order 77 whereby it was decided to set up a group of experts to examine the question of Eurafrican co-operation. Furthermore, the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questionsand the Committee on Cultural and ScientificQuestions both intend to apply for expert assistance.

It is essential, therefore, that this appropriation be increased from 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 frs.

3. FUNCTIONAL EXPENDITURE

Sub-Head 41 : Costs of the Cultural Programme

In Recommendation 90, the Assembly requested that such expenditure be increased from 19,000,000 to 30,000,000 frs. The Committeeof Ministers decided on a compromise,and the appropriation was increased to 25,000,000 frs.

The Committee feels bound to repeat the request submitted in connection with the current Budget and proposes that this figure be raised to 30,000,000 frs.

4. HEAD VIII

Information Expenditure

In Recommendation 93 concerning the methods of furthering the propagation of the European idea in the member countries, adopted on 18th April, 1956, the Assembly asked the Committee of Ministers to give favourable consideration to the possibility of granting the necessary funds to give effect to the proposals set forth in the Report of the Committee on Cultural and Scientific Questions.

In order to provide the Secretariat-General with the means required to further the propagation of the European idea in member countries, the following estimates are required under Head VIII of the Budget of the Council of Europe for 1957 :

Sub-Head 42 : Remuneration and allowances of national correspondents of the Directorateof Information - 20.400.000 francs

Sub-Head 44 : Informationprogramme - 31.100.000 francs

Sub-Head 45 : Production ofshort films - 21.500.000 francs

In addition, the permanentestablishment of theDirectorate of Informationshould be increased by three,the corresponding creditsunder Vote I being increasedby - 5.500.000 francs

The credits under Sub-Head 20 " Official journeys " should be increased by - 1,500,000 frs. to meet the needs of the Directorateof Information of the Secretariat-General.

Expenditure relating to municipal and regional affairs

As the present Head X (Other Expenditure)only covers expenditure relating to the European Prize, the Committee proposes that it should henceforth be entitled " Expenditure relating to Municipal and Regional Affairs " and that it should be divided into the following Sub-Heads :

4.1. European Conference of Local Authorities

In Recommendation 90 the Assembly asked that the necessary credits should be opened to cover the operational costs of the European Conference of Local Authorities, which the Assembly decided to convene in its Resolution 76. The Committee of Ministers has not yet taken a decision on this Recommendation.

The expenditure involved in holdingsuch a conference would not exceed 11,200,000 1rs.

This estimate is intended to cover organisational costs (in particular, the travelling expenses and subsistence allowances of the participants and the remuneration of temporary staff).

4.2. European Prize

In its Recommendation 90 the Assemblyasked that the amount of the Prize should be raised from 250,000 frs. to 1,000,000 frs.

The Committee of Ministers has not yet taken a decision on this request.

Reverting to its previous request, your Committee proposes that in 1957 too, the amount of the Prize should be increased to 1,000,000 frs. and that a credit of 250,000 should be opened in respect of minor expenditure,such as the diploma, the medal, etc.

4.3. Exchange of visits between local authorities

In its Resolution 75 (1955) the Assemblyapproved a plan for exchange visits between local authorities. The application of the scheme will begin with the following preliminary measures:

a. First of all, a circular letter will be sent out to some 60 national associations of local authorities, attached to a memorandum explaining the operation of the scheme and a number of copies of a questionnaire intended for the municipalitieslikely to act as " host " authorities.

b. the publication and dissemination of a Yearbook containing a list of the " host " municipalitiesand various particulars of interest to them.

c. two meetings every year of the AdministrativeCommittee operating the scheme.

The expenditure to the amount of 500,000 frs. in respect of the establishment of a scheme for the exchange of visits between members of European local authorities should be charged to the corresponding items of the Budget, and the necessary estimates should be made accordingly.

As far as the other Votes of the Budget of the Council of Europe are concerned, the Committee has no special comments to make regarding Vote I : " Expenditure of the Secretariat-General " ; Vote IV: "Expenditure in connection with the work of the Commission and Court provided for in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and FundamentalFreedoms ", or Vote V : " Initial Capital Expenditure ".