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Opinion of the Assembly on the Budget for 1958

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

A. Draft Opinion

The Assembly,

Having regard to the preliminary draft of Vote II of the Budget for 1958 (Expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly), transmitted to the Assembly by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe;

Having regard to the Budget of the Council of Europe for the Financial Year 1957, as adopted by the Committee of Ministers, together with the General Accounts for the Financial Year 1955, this being the latest period for which final accounts are available;

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

Having regard to the attached explanatory memorandum;

Adopts the following Opinion:

1. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that, as regards Sub-heads (a) to (m) of the preliminary draft of Vote II, the Secretary-General's estimates take into account the growing activity of the Assembly and the possibility of a Session lasting a month, as provided for in the Statute.

2. All expenditure in the field of Local Authorities should be grouped together under one Head, which should include the following items :

   Sub-Head (n) — European Prise : 1,250,000 frs.

   Sub-Head (o) — Conference of Local Authorities - as proposed by the Secretary-General

   Sub-Head (p) — European Plan for Inter-municipal Exchanges and printing: 1,500,000 frs.

3. A new Head should be inserted under Vote II and include the following Sub-Head :

   (q) — Grants-in-aid to political groups : 1,500,000 frs.

4. A list of members of the Secretariat-General staff placed wholly at the disposal of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly should be appended to the Budget, as prescribed in Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers.

5. The establishment of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly should be as follows :

   The Clerk,

   1 Deputy Clerk with the rank of Head of Department,

   1 Counsellor,

   12 Secretaries (at least 3 of whom should be First Secretaries),

   14 Assistants (at least 4 of whom should be Qualified Assistants).

B. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

General Remarks

The Assembly, which is required to express an opinion on the 1958 Budget, has again received satisfactory documentary information from the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

This information is mainly provided in two documents :

1. Preliminary draft Budget for the Financial Year 1958 (Vote If — expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly);
2. The Council of Europe Budget for the Financial Year 1957, adopted by the Committee of Ministers[1].

1. The preliminary draft Budget for 1958 refers only to expenditure relating to the Consultative Assembly, which is covered by Vote II of the Budget. The appropriations provided for amount to 110,290,000 frs. as compared with 88,200,000 frs. The increase is mainly due to the three following causes :

a. A part of the appropriations requested by the Assembly in its Opinion No. 19 in respect of its working expenditure last year was not granted by the Committee of Ministers, because in previous years no Session had lasted for as long as the period of thirty days laid down in the Statute. The Committee on the Budget considers, however, that estimates of this kind can be based solely upon statutory provisions. The Committee therefore noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General's estimates for the 1958 Financial Year take into account both the increased activity of the Consultative Assembly and the contingency of a Session of thirty days' duration.

b. The activities of the Assembly are continuously increasing, as shown in the following table :

c. It should be noted that there have been increases in payments to temporary staff and in the cost of printing, paper, etc.

2. Expenditure and receipts under the Budget of the Council of Europe for the Financial Year 1957 amount to 905,020,000 frs. It can be seen that the Assembly expenditure under Vote II represents less than 10 % of this figure. Details of expenditure and receipts, as well as the respective contributions payable by Member States, are given in the Appendices to Resolution (56) 32 of the Committee of Ministers at the beginning of the Budget for the Financial Year 1957. The Committee on the Budget was able to confirm that these estimates were reasonable. The cancellations made in the 1955 Budget, particularly under Vote II (Expenditure of the Consultative Assembly), are due to the 1955 Session lasting only nineteen, instead of thirty days, as laid down in the Statute. With regard to Cultural Expenditure, the Committee notes with regret that the Committee of Ministers has decided not to increase the appropriation for the cultural activities of the Council of Europe, as recommended by the Assembly in its Opinion No. 19. The Committee takes this opportunity of re-asserting its firm conviction that the establishment of a Cultural Fund under the auspices of the Council of Europe, as was advocated in Recommendation 74 (1955) of the Assembly, would be the best means of developing the activities of the Council of Europe in the cultural and scientific spheres, in accordance with the provisions of the Statute and of the European Cultural Convention and with the Council's responsibilities in this field.

	NUMBER OF MEETINGS	NUMBER OF DAYS
1954	87	155
1955	102	117
1956	163	192

Detailed Comments

1. These documents may be obtained by Representatives from the Distribution Department.

3. As stated in Opinion No. 19 of the Assembly on the Budget for 1957, expenditure in the field of Local Authorities should be grouped under one Head. This Head should have three Sub-Heads covering the working costs of the following Assembly activities in this field :

(a) European Conference of Local Authorities

The sums set aside so far have proved inadequate.

For the European Conference of Local Authorities to meet under satisfactory conditions it is desirable that the 1957 estimate of 3,500,000 frs. should be increased.

(i) The 135 delegates should be entitled to reimbursement of the whole of their travelling expenses. For this purpose a sum of 4,300,000 frs. is needed[2].

(ii) The subsistence allowance of 4,000 frs. per delegate for the three days' duration of the Conference amounts to 1,600,000 frs.

(iii) Expenses relating to temporary staff amounted to 1,382,525 frs. for the first Conference. This sum is quite inadequate. If it were doubled the Conference services could operate normally. The fact should not be overlooked that it was only through a real feat of financial dexterity that the first Conference was able to meet at all. Numbers had to be cut by half-and certain services even had to be abolished. Moreover, it should not be assumed that for all its meetings the Conference will have the voluntary services of officials who last January often worked under extremely trying conditions. For this reason the sum of 1,382,525 frs. should be increased by 1,250,000 frs. The sum available for temporary staff would then be roughly 2,500,000 frs.

(iv) To recapitulate, the following sums are required :

Travelling expenses - 4,300,000 frs.

Subsistence allowances - 1,600,000 frs.

Temporary staff - 2,500,000 frs.

Miscellaneous - 100,000 frs.

Total : - 8,500,000 frs.

A request for a minimum allocation of 8,500,000 frs. to cover the three days that the second Conference would last does not therefore seem to be excessive.

(b) European Prize

In its Opinion No. 19 on the Budgets for 1956 and 1957, the Assembly asked that the allocation should be fixed at 1,250,000 frs. The Committee of Ministers did not think fit to comply with this request.

The Committee on the Budget is of the opinion that the sum of 1,000,000 frs. is a reasonable estimate in view of the fact that, as happened for example in 1956, the Prize is sometimes awarded to two twin towns each of which, consequently, only receives half the sum provided.

(c) European Plan for Inter municipal Exchanges and printing charges

The Commission should repeat its request for an allocation of 500,000 frs. to enable the European Plan for Intermunicipal Exchanges to be implemented. No action has so far been taken on this request, which was expressed in Opinion No. 19 of 21st April 1956.

Furthermore, the Committee also needs an allocation to be able to bring out a German and Italian edition of its more noteworthy publications : the booklets on the European Prize, on pairing and on the European Conference of Local Authorities. For this a reasonable estimate would be 1,000,000 frs.

2. Sub-Head (q) (new) — Grants-in-aid to political groups

2. This figure is based on the expenses incurred for the first Conference.

The Committee on the Budget has considered a proposal by the Bureau of the Assembly that a fixed grant be made to each of the three political groups (Christian-Democrat, Liberal, Socialist) and suggests a sum of 500,000 frs. to meet all the administrative requirements of each group.

3. List of permanent Assembly Services staff to be appended to the Budget

At a meeting of the Bureau on 23rd November 1953, it was decided, at the suggestion of the Secretary-General, that a list of permanent members of the staff of the Assembly Services should be appended to the Budget.

This decision was confirmed by the Committee of Ministers on 13th December 1953 in its Resolution (53) 38.

It was not, however, implemented until the 31st January 1955, when the Secretary- General appended a list of the members of the permanent staff of the Assembly Services to his letter transmitting to the President of the Assembly Vote II of the Budget.

The Assembly requests that the list in question be appended to the Budget.

The establishment of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly in 1955, 1956 and as at 1st April 1957, is as follows :

BANKS	**ESTABLISHMENT**			
31.1.55	**31.1.56**	**1.4.57**	**Requested for 1958**	
Clerk	1	1	1	1
Deputy Clerk	0	1	1	1
Counsellor	2	1	1	1
Secretaries	12	9	9	12
Temporary Staff	0	0	1	0
Supervisor	0	0	1	0
Qualified Assistant	4	3	2	14
Assistant	8	8	8	14
Temporary Assistant	0	0	2	8
Total	27	23	26	29

4. Staff requested for the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly

The establishment of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly should be as follows :

The Clerk,

1 Deputy Clerk with the rank of Head of Department,

1 Counsellor,

12 Secretaries at least 3 of whom should be First Secretaries,

14 Assistants at least 4 of whom should be Qualified Assistants.

If this is compared with the present state of affairs, the Assembly's request would mean :

a. transforming a post of Counsellor into a post of Deputy Clerk with the rank of Head of Department;

b. transferring the Secretary of the Committee on Cultural Questions back to the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly;

c. transforming a post of Supervisor into a post of Secretary for the Committee on Local Authorities;

d. lcreating a post of Secretary for the Working Party on Relations with National Parliaments;

e. unblocking a post of Secretary at present held by a member of the staff on special leave for personal reasons;

f. lcreating three new posts of Assistant.

These requests are made on the following grounds :

1. The rank of Head of Department for the Deputy Clerk partly meets the request made by the Assembly in its Opinion No. 21 of 19th October 1956. From 1949 to 1956 the duties of Deputy Clerk were performed by a temporary member of the Staff, who received a fixed payment of 750,000 frs. per annum. After his resignation, a permanent member of the staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly was appointed Deputy Clerk without being granted any additional allowance. Opinion No. 21 requested that an allowance of 360,000 frs., be granted to him. The Committee of Ministers has not yet taken any action on Opinion No. 21. The Committee considers that the matter should be settled and that it would, at least, be only fair to give the permanent Deputy Clerk the rank of Head of Department, in view of his new responsibilities. Moreover, the Clerk has the rank of Deputy Secretary-General. In the Secretariat- General the ranks between Deputy Secretary- General and Counsellor include Directors and Heads of Departments. It would, therefore, be proper for the person who replaces the Clerk during his absence to hold a higher rank than that of Counsellor, and the Committee considers that the rank of Head of Department is the minimum that the Assembly has the right to claim.

2. Of the twelve Secretaries requested, ten are required as Secretaries of thirteen committees, one as Head of the Private Office of the President, and one as Secretary of the Sessions Service. This figure of 12 is the same as that obtaining in the Office of the Clerk in 1955. Re-organisation reduced the number to nine, a reduction which has continually given rise to difficulties. The increase from nine to twelve Secretaries would be secured by the following measures :

   a. The Secretary of the Cultural Committee, who had been transferred to the Research Directorate by the re-organisation of the Secretariat, would be transferred back to the Office of the Clerk while continuing to co-operate with the Research Directorate. This would be a purely administrative measure.

   b. The Secretariat duties for the Committee on Local Authorities, at present performed by a Supervisor, would be carried out by a Secretary, as is the case for all other committees. The post of Supervisor would be abolished.

   c. A new post of Secretary would be allotted to the Secretariat of the Working Party on Relations with National Parliaments, a new section created as a result of Resolution 104 of 25th October 1956. The Secretary-General has proposed the creation of this post, in pursuance of Order 100 of 25th October 1956.

3. Moreover, the unblocking of the post of Secretary at present occupied by a member of the staff on special leave for personal reasons would enable an assistant Secretary to be appointed to the Committee on General Affairs, which would at the same time regularise the present situation and make it similar to that existing before re-organisation. The Committee therefore request that this post be unblocked by removing the staff member at present on special leave from the establishment, or by any other appropriate administrative measure.

4. Bearing in mind the importance of the duties of committee secretaries, your Committee urges that at least three posts of First Secretaries be allotted to the Office of the Clerk. This figure corresponds to the proportion of First Secretaries in the Secretariat-General as a whole (20 out of 67).

5. The Committee likewise requests that at least four posts of Qualified Assistant be allotted to the Office of the Clerk, which more or less corresponds to the proportion of Qualified Assistants in the Secretariat (33 out of 117). Lastly, increasing the number of Assistants by three would do no more than regularise the present situation, since two temporary Assistants have already been employed for many months in the Office of the Clerk; the third post is intended for the Secretariat of the Working Party on Relations with National Parliaments.

Enfin, l'augmentation de trois unités du nombre d'Assistantes n'a comme effet que de régulariser la situation de fait actuelle pour deux Assistantes temporaires déjà employées au Greffe depuis de longs mois, un troisième poste étant destiné au secrétariat du groupe de travail chargé des liaisons avec les parlements nationaux.

4. En ce qui concerne les autres titres du budget du Conseil de l'Europe, la commission ne croit pas devoir faire de commentaires particuliers.