

Opinion 58 (1971)¹

Budget of the Council of Europe for 1972

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to paragraph 1 of Resolution (53) 38 of the Committee of Ministers, which stipulates :

"When drawing up the draft Budget for the Council of Europe, the Secretary General shall consult the Assembly on that part of the draft Budget which comprises the relevant operational appropriations. Such consultation shall take place in accordance with a procedure to be laid down by agreement between the President of the Assembly and the Secretary General" ;

2. Having regard to the Secretary General's letter of 15 March 1962 defining the procedure for consultation both as regards the part of the Budget containing the estimate relating to the Assembly's operational expenditure and as regards the Budget as a whole ;

3. Having regard to the Budget of the Council of Europe for 1971 adopted by the Committee of Ministers and to the general accounts for the financial year 1969, being the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed and a discharge given,

4. Adopts the following opinion :

Part 1 Draft Vote III of the 1972 Budget

(Expenditure of the Consultative Assembly)

1. It is proposed that Vote III of the 1972 Budget be drawn up as set out below :

VOTE III

EXPENDITURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

HEAD I - TEMPORARY STAFF

Sub-head 82 - Remuneration of temporary staff

Estimate for 1972 - 1 600 000

Remuneration of days worked by temporary staff engaged on short contracts for Assembly part-sessions and meetings of Assembly bodies between part-sessions, calculated on the scales in force at the time of preparing this draft.

Article 32 of the Statute of the Council of Europe entitles the Assembly to meet for one month per year.

1. Assembly debate on 6 October 1971 (12th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2998](#), report of the Committee on the Budget). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6 October 1971 (12th Sitting).



Opinion 58 (1971)

The 1971 estimates were based on 25 meeting days, but the Assembly decided to alter the arrangements for its part-sessions and to reduce the spring and autumn part-sessions to one week, the January Session extending into a second week. The total length of sessions during 1972 is thus fixed for the time being at 19 days, including a joint meeting with the European Parliament during the Assembly's May part-session.

Furthermore, the Standing Committee decided, at its meeting of 10 December 1970, to hold at least one of its meetings each year in a European city other than Paris or Strasbourg. This decision naturally affects the estimates under Vote III.

Remarks :

It is interesting to find a difference of 700 500 F between expenditure in 1970 (1 045 000 F) and the 1971 appropriation (1 745 500 F). This is due to the implementation of Committee of Ministers' Resolution (70) 52 introducing German and Italian as Assembly working languages. For this purpose, the Committee of Ministers agreed to a supplementary appropriation of 730 000 F (Resolution (71) 17) increasing the total appropriation under this sub-head from 1 015 500 F to 1 745 500 F.

In the light of experience and of the above information, the 1972 estimate has been made up as follows :

(a) Staff engaged for sessions

Appendix

Category	Daily rate of pay	Number of working days	Total
Engaged			
outside Strasbourg	locally		
I. Session staff			
Parliamentary staff :			
Heads of section	224,50	114	25 593
Parliamentary secretaries	195	76	14 820
Precis writers	195	1 144	22 230
Verbatim reporters	195-250	475	102 225
Chief usher	102	19	1 938
Ushers	90	247	22 230
Any independent staff are engaged at market rates.			
II. Linguistic staff			
Interpreters	642	514,30	589
Translation revisers	326	225	302
Translators I	280	179	1 264
III. Assistants			
Assistant I	119,50	64,50	65
Assistant II A	-	60,50	2 945
Assistant II B	111,50	56,50	2 945
Assistant III	105	50	50
IV. Workshop staff			
Duplicating machine operators and staplers	-	41	673
Assemblers	-	35	548
Distributors	-	35	278
V. Other staff			
Precis-writers/ Directorate of Information	224,50/195	76	17 062
Doctor	-	142	19
Messengers/Ushers	-	35	1 003
Switchboard staff/ drivers	-	56,50/51	103
		8 960	1 478 088

Brought forward 1 478 088

(b) Conference staff engaged for short periods for meetings between plenary sessions (interpreters, shorthand-typists- translators etc.) :

One 3-day meeting of the Standing Committee to be held in a European city other than Paris or Strasbourg. (cf. [Resolution 484](#) of the Assembly) - 70 000

Other committee meetings..... - 130 000

1 678 088

Deduction (in the light of experience) - 78 000

Estimate..... - 1 600 000

Opinion 58 (1971)

The estimate represents a decrease of 145 500 F by comparison with the 1971 appropriation of 1 745 500 F. This is due to the reduction of the number of meeting-days from 25 to 19 per year. The estimate will, of course, need to be adjusted if there is any change in the remuneration for this category of staff during the year, or if the total length of Assembly sessions is altered.

Sub-head 83 - Travelling expenses and allowances for travelling time

Estimate for 1972..... - 380 000

Travelling expenses and allowances for travelling time for temporary staff engaged outside Strasbourg.

Remarks :

In 1971, a supplementary appropriation of 210 000 F was voted by the Committee of Ministers for the introduction of two additional working languages in the Assembly. This explains the difference between 1970 expenditure of 202 867 F and the 1971 appropriation of 415 000 F.

The decrease in the 1972 estimate (35 000 F) by comparison with 1971 is due to the reduction in the number of the Assembly's meeting-days.

Sub-head 84 - Sickness and accident insurance

Estimate for 1972..... _ 25 000

Council of Europe's share (60 %) in the sickness and accident insurance premiums of temporary staff remunerated under Sub-head 82.

Remarks :

Expenditure for 1970 was 19 214 F. The estimate for 1972 has been increased to cover requirements in the light of expenditure in the first half of 1971.

Sub-head 85 - Technical staff seconded from national administrations

Estimate for 1972 - 70 000

The estimate is to cover :

refunds to various national administrations of the salaries of staff seconded to the Council for special services during Assembly sessions and meetings of the Assembly and its organs ; travelling expenses, subsistence allowances and insurance for such staff (radio-technicians, post-office technicians, police, firemen) ;

gratuities for special work done by lowergrade staff of national administrations in connection with meetings of Assembly organs elsewhere than in Strasbourg.

Remarks :

No change.

HEAD II - SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Preliminary remark

This head covers only expenditure on printing, publishing and the hire of cars. Other expenditure on supplies and services comes under the relevant sub-heads of Heads II and IV of Vote I.

Sub-head 86 - Publishing and printing

Estimate for 1972..... - 400 000

Publishing and printing costs relating to :

official Assembly documents ;

the distribution of certain adopted texts and information supplied by the national parliaments.

Remarks :

It should be noted that the expenditure for 1970 (217 139 F) was considerably lower than the appropriation (410 000 F). As the printing of the official report and working papers of the Assembly for the September Session of 1970 was not finished by 31 December 1970, the relevant expenses had to be carried over to the 1971 financial year. After the 1971 Budget, however, estimates and expenditure will again be in balance, as the appropriation will take into account the fact that the printing costs of the official report and working papers of the autumn session will be included in the Budget for the following year.

The estimate for 1972 shows an increase of 20 000 F compared with 1971 (380 000 F) which is explained by the general increase in 1971 in printing and publishing costs.

Sub-head 87 - Hire of cars

Estimate for 1972..... - 13 000

Hire of cars for the Assembly and its organs.

Remarks :

Estimate increased by 2 000 F compared with 1971 to cover the rise in hire charges since 1970.

HEAD III - OTHER OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

Sub-head 88 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1972..... - 53 000

Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by the President of the Consultative Assembly in the course of his duties :

(a) Fixed representational allowance - 34 000

(b) Travel and subsistence..... - 19 000

53 000

Remarks :

The increase of 5 000 F compared with the appropriation for 1971 (48 000 F) is due to :

the need to increase the fixed representational allowance to offset the rise in the cost of living since 1 January 1970..... 3 000

the effect in 1972 of the increase from 175 to 200 F per day of the allowance paid to members of the Assembly travelling on Assembly instructions. - 2 000

Sub-head 89 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1972 - 34 000

(a) Special duties allowance..... - 6 000

(b) Remuneration of a shorthand-typist and other secretarial expenses..... - 10 700

(c) Official travel by Private Office staff..... - 17 300

(d) Sundry secretarial expenses..... - token entry

Remarks :

An increase of 1 500 F has been requested to allow for the May 1971 increase in the daily subsistence allowances payable to staff on official journeys (800 F) and the revaluation of the Swiss franc, the currency in which the shorthand-typist's salary is fixed (700 F).

The amount of 6 000 F for the special duties allowance is based on the amounts at present paid to the staff concerned, the Head of the President's Private Office and the secretary attached to it.

It is pointed out, however, that when examining the 1971 Budget, the Ministers' Deputies agreed in principle that the allowances paid to staff of the Private Offices of the President of the Assembly and the Secretary General should be the same.

Sub-head 90 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Consultative Assembly

Estimate for 1972..... - 117 000

The estimate is to cover :

(a) entertainment and similar expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and by committee Chairmen and Rapporteurs - 26 000

(b) travelling expenses and subsistence allowances of members of the Assembly attending, on behalf of the Council of Europe, meetings of certain Council organs apart from sessions of the Assembly and meetings of Assembly committees (Bureau of the Assembly, Joint Committee etc.) or travelling on instructions from the Assembly - 62 000

(c) fixed allowance for the political groups to cover various items of expenditure - secretarial assistance, documentation and travel - incurred by members of the Assembly in the discharge of specific duties for the Council of Europe (Resolution (58) 4 of 27 March 1968) - 27 000

(d) premium of the accident insurance taken out for members of the Assembly travelling officially at the Council's expense - 2 000

117 000

Remarks :

1. The estimate shows a decrease of 26 000 F compared with the appropriation granted for 1971. The difference between 1970 expenditure (73 500 F) and the 1971 appropriation (143 000 F) is accounted for mainly by the travel and subsistence expenses of a Consultative Assembly delegation to Ottawa, the cost of which was estimated at 60 000 F.

2. There is at present no intention to appoint any delegation of the Assembly to travel to an overseas non-member State of the Council of Europe. It is thus not necessary to ask for a specific estimate for 1972 as was done for 1971. The Assembly would, however, like to emphasise once more the importance to its activities of relations with the parliaments of non-member States. The Assembly will, therefore, as pointed out in Opinions Nos. 52 and 55 arrange for such journeys when considered necessary.

3. The decrease of 26 000 F in the estimate for 1972 compared with the appropriation for 1971 is due to :

- a. an increase in entertainment expenses to allow for the rise in the cost of living... + 4 000
- b. a decrease in travelling expenses for members of the Assembly..... - 30 000

Sub-head 90 bis - Members of the Consultative Assembly attending the Multidisciplinary Symposium on Drug Dependence (20 - 28 March 1972 in Strasbourg)

Estimate for 1972..... - 41 000

The Committee of Ministers has decided to include in Vote III of the 1972 Budget the appropriations intended to cover the expenses of members of parliament attending the symposium.

Remarks :

It should be noted that if the Assembly decided to set up one or more sub-committees to take part in the symposium, this estimate could be substantially reduced. The travel expenses would then be paid by the national parliaments concerned. There would remain, however, the problem of small States which are often reluctant to send members to sub-committees when they have to pay their travelling expenses.

Sub-head 91 - Official journeys

Estimate for 1972..... - 220 000

Official travel by :

staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly,

Secretariat staff required to attend meetings of Assembly organs at places other than Strasbourg or meetings with consultants

Remarks :

The estimate has been increased from 176 500 to 220 000 F. The increase of 25% for 1972 is accounted for by :

the revision in 1971 of the daily allowance to staff members on official journeys..... - 3 500

an additional yearly meeting of the Standing Committee (see Sub-head 82)..... - 40 000

Every meeting of the Standing Committee held in accordance with [Resolution 484](#) adopted on 10 May 1971 entails a concomitant series of meetings of other committees of the Consultative Assembly for which secretarial assistance has to be provided. The place where each meeting is held has, of course, some effect on the cost.

Such was the case in Berlin in July 1971. The additional official journey expenditure which was then incurred will be covered by transfer within the Assembly vote.

If there is any change in rates for official journey allowances or in fares in the course of the year, the estimate will, of course, need to be adjusted accordingly.

Sub-head 92 - Consultation of experts

Estimate for 1972..... - 75 000

Travelling expenses, subsistence allowances and fees of experts asked to carry out technical work or called in for consultation by Assembly organs, either individually or in working parties.

Remarks :

It has been found to be increasingly difficult to obtain competent experts because of the low fees offered. The increase of 5 000 F compared with the appropriation for 1971 is intended to enable the Assembly's committees to offer fees more appropriate to the work entailed.

Sub-head 93 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Estimate for 1972..... - 100 000

The Assembly plans the following conferences for 1972 :

Third Parliamentary and Scientific Conference ([Resolution 466](#)) at Lausanne ;

European Symposium of Frontier Regions ([Resolution 472](#)) in Strasbourg.

The estimate is made up as follows :

I. Travelling expenses of participants and experts' fees - 34 000

II. Temporary staff

Interpreters - 11 000

Translators - 24 000

Additional Secretariat staff - 3 000

III. Official journeys - 14 000

IV. Reception - 6 000

V. Sundries (equipment, supplies, postage etc.) - 8 000

100 000

Remarks :

It should be pointed out that, according to estimates made at the beginning of the year, the cost of holding the two conferences would be as follows :

- Third Parliamentary and Scientific Conference..... - 110 000 to 120 000

It is worth mentioning that the revaluation of the Swiss franc will affect expenditure, as the Conference is to be held at Lausanne.

- European Symposium of Frontier Regions..... approximately 10 000

This amount was intended to cover only the cost of preparing the background reports and the attendance of one or two experts at two preparatory meetings of the Organising Committee.

In addition, the 5th Seminar on International Voluntary Service is to be held in 1973 and a certain amount of expenditure on preparations for it will have to be incurred in 1972.

The appropriation in 1971 was 168 000 F. However, the estimate for 1972 has been pared down to 100 000 F, bearing in mind the new schedule of preparatory meetings.

The Assembly stands by the position it adopted at the last meeting of the Joint Committee on 9 June 1971, when it was suggested that a fixed sum be allocated each year for ad hoc conferences. The effect of this would be to remove a source of friction between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers - which is in the interests of both and, therefore, of the Council as a whole.

The estimates under this sub-head might, of course be reconsidered in the light of the Committee of Ministers' decision regarding the Assembly proposal.

Sub-head 94 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this Vote

Estimate for 1972..... - 15 000

This estimate is to cover :

light refreshments for staff on night duty,
the hire of loudspeakers for calling cars,
night watchmen,
reception and information services,
miscellaneous and unforeseen expenditure.

Remarks :

The appropriation for 1971 was 11 500 F.

The increase of 3 500 F under this sub-head is justified by the increase which has occurred in wages, prices and service charges since 1970, without there having been any increase in the appropriation in 1971.

Sub-head 95 - Europe Prize

Estimate for 1972..... - 10 000

(a) Europe Prize

(b) Provision for expenses in connection with the presentation of the Prize (travel and subsistence for the mayor of the prize-winning municipality, reception in his honour, diplomas and medals)

No change.

2. The Assembly notes that the total estimates under this Vote amount to 3 153 000 F in 1972, i.e. a decrease of 147 000 F (4.5%) by comparison with the 1971 appropriations (3 300 000 F), including a supplementary appropriation of 948 000 F authorised by Resolution (71) 17 and after apportionment of the provision for the increase in the cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration.

3. This decrease may be broken down as follows :

(a) Increases

- Sickness and accident insurance (temporary staff - 6 000
- Publishing and printing - 20 000
- Hire of cars... - 2 000

Representational, travelling and subsistence of the President of the Assembly... - 5 000

Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly... - 1 500

- Travelling expenses of certain members of the Consultative Assembly attending the Multidisciplinary Symposium... - 41 000

- Official journeys... - 43 500

- Consultation of experts - 5 000

Sundry expenditure.... - 3 500

Total increases.... - 127 500

(b) Decreases

- Remuneration of temporary staff... - 145 500²

- Travelling expenses and allowances for travelling time for staff engaged outside Strasbourg... - 35 000

- Travelling expenses of members of the Assembly... - 26 000

- Organisation of ad hoc conferences... - 68 000

Total decreases... - 274 500

Not decrease.. - 147 000

4. However, to complete the picture, the Assembly's operational expenditure includes not only the estimates in Vote III, but also certain expenditure entered under Vote I (Common expenditure), which is incurred in respect of the Assembly and its committees., salaries of staff of the Office of the Clerk, equipment and supplies, general services (workshop, interpretation, translation).

5. It is worth mentioning at this point, however, that the staff of the Office of the Clerk is small for a parliamentary assembly, numbering only 39 permanent officials in 1971 : 1 A7, 1 A6, 3 A5, 7 A4, 9 A2/A3, 1 B5, 2 B4, 11 B3 and 1 B2.

The Office of the Clerk is, of course, supported by the other Secretariat departments, enjoying the assistance of the administrative and service departments and of some of the operational departments.

The relatively small increases in recent years in the staff of the Office of the Clerk (from 32 in 1964 to 39 in 1971) have been due to the expansion of the Assembly's work and especially the work of its committees, which often have to deal with highly technical subjects connected with the Work Programme.

Part 2 Proposals relating to votes other than Vote III and general remarks

I. Proposals relating to votes other than Vote III

1. Staff of the Office of the Clerk

(a) The Assembly has embarked upon the promotion, through the Committee on Science and Technology, of an original form of international scientific co-operation. This project has already produced tangible results in specific fields at international level. The Committee on Science and Technology, being conscious of the keen interest aroused by the project in scientific circles, notes that there is within the Council of Europe no real scientific department which could provide the necessary back-up for an ambitious programme. The present staff of the Office of the Clerk will not for very long be able to cope with the substantial amount of work involved and the committee feels it is essential that the number of staff be increased.

The Assembly fully supports this claim, which it considers wholly justified.

(b) The Committee of Ministers has approved the creation, with effect from 1 January 1970, of an A5 post to enable an office to be set up in the Office of the Clerk to centralise the control of procedure and of documents (Table Office).

2. It should be noted that the decrease is due to the reduction of the number of days in the session. It will be offset, however, by a meeting of the Standing Committee held in accordance with [Resolution 484](#) adopted on 10 May 1971. The meeting of other committees of the Assembly will involve additional official journey expenditure and the increased estimate under Sub-head 91 partly counter-balances the decrease.

The Assembly had also requested the creation of a post of private secretary (grade B3) for the Table Office. This has already been refused twice. The Committee of Ministers is urged once again to accede to the Assembly's request for 1972.

(c) Furthermore, in reply to [Opinion No. 55](#), the Committee of Ministers agreed, as requested by the Assembly, to continue the A5 post which had become vacant in the Office of the Clerk as a result of the establishment of a new Directorate of Environment and Local Authorities, which involved the transfer of certain activities previously placed under the Clerk's control but which were independent of the Assembly. A request should therefore be made for the creation in the 1972 Budget of a post of private secretary (grade B3) to the A5 official.

2. Common expenditure

Maintenance of furniture and equipment

The Assembly has repeatedly called for substantial improvements in working conditions in the Council. For some years now, for budgetary reasons, the estimates for modernisation of furniture and equipment have been sharply reduced by the Committee of Ministers. The Assembly recommends the Committee of Ministers to authorise essential expenditure on furniture and equipment. It is pointed out, in particular, that working conditions are very difficult in the Assembly Chamber as well as in the offices and elsewhere and that a number of alterations are urgently necessary despite the prospect of a new building being erected.

II. General remarks

1. The Council of Europe Budget for 1969, the last year for which accounts have been closed and a discharge given, totalled 45 087 126 F, an increase of 12.5 % over the previous year (39 377 336 F). This increase included :

an appropriation of 2 727 000 F to provide the implementation of decisions taken regarding the remuneration of permanent staff ;

an amount of 1 368 734 F carried over from the previous year in respect of capital outlay on the European Youth Centre ;

an appropriation of 100 000 F for the celebration of the Council of Europe's 20th anniversary.

The general accounts for 1969 included cancelled appropriations of 102 615 F, or 0.2% of the total authorised. This percentage is extremely small and the Secretary General is to be congratulated on the accuracy of the estimates.

The Auditors have certified that the Budget was properly operated and the appropriations rationally and economically managed.

The Assembly takes note of the Auditors' findings.

2. With regard to 1970, since no discharge has yet been given in respect of the general accounts, the Assembly can only refer to the various Committee of Ministers' resolutions adopting the Budget and authorising supplementary appropriations (Resolutions (69) 47 and (70) 26). The appropriations authorised by the Committee of Ministers totalled 52 248 000 F, an increase of 7 000 000 F over 1969 (14.4 %)

As stated above, however, it is at present not possible for the Assembly to compare expenditure for the two years.

3. Lastly, the 1971 Budget totals 61 350 000 F, including supplementary estimates of 2 295 000 F, authorised by the Committee of Ministers' Resolution (71) 17. The supplementary appropriations for the introduction of two new working languages in the Assembly consist of 940 000 F for temporary staff and 230 000 F for alterations to committee rooms.

The budget of expenditure for 1971 shows an increase of 9 000 000 F over 1970.

4. As many be seen from the foregoing, the Assembly, when drawing up its opinion on the 1972 Budget, does not have sufficiently accurate and detailed information at its disposal, the last financial year for which it can make a thorough appraisal being 1969, the last year in respect of which a discharge has been given for the final accounts.

The Assembly spokesman on the Joint Committee stressed the Assembly's need for full information in budgetary matters. The Assembly cannot stand idly by while some of its activities or some of the Council's activities promoted by the Assembly are impeded or discontinued.

For this reason, when the Committee of Ministers, before approving the Budget, makes reductions in the estimates, the Assembly should be informed of the resultant effect of the Organisation's work.

5. Generally speaking it may be said that the member States' governments are reluctant to vote the appropriations required for expansion of the Council of Europe's activities. For a variety of reasons beyond our control, there are apparent increases in the Budget from one year to the next without any corresponding expansion in activities.

The Assembly, apart from its powers to draw up its own operational estimates, should also be enabled to exercise fully with regard to the Budget as a whole the consultative function which is its statutory right. For this purpose it is essential that the Assembly be provided with all the relevant information.

Under the present system, the Assembly has always had to reply on the work done by the relevant Secretariat departments. This means that the appropriate Assembly committee is not able to examine the budgetary information and its implications at first hand until after the event and has virtually no opportunity to advance an opinion at the planning stage. This reduces the scope of the committee's work. If the Assembly is to engage in effective budgetary dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, the Committee on the Budget must be more closely involved in the procedure for drawing up the Budget.

7. Lastly, it should be pointed out that at the meeting of the Joint Committee in June 1971, some members of the Assembly asked the Committee of Ministers whether it would not be wise to prepare budgetary forecasts on the basis of long-range forecasting and a system of analysis whereby the cost of the various activities could be established. The purpose of this would be to establish priorities and analyse results. By this method, the expansion of the Council's activities could be partially offset by cutting down or discontinuing certain existing activities which do not guarantee the most effective use of the budgetary resources available.

With a view to eliminating conflict with the Committee of Ministers, the Assembly also wonders whether it would be desirable to introduce an arrangement to counteract the effects of inflation, it being well known that inflation is one of the most obvious causes of increases in the Budget from year to year. Comparison of costs and the assessment of appropriations needed for the execution of projects spread over several years must not be affected by inflation and currency erosion.