Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Opinion 100 (1980)[1]

Programme-budget for the operational expenditure of the Assembly in 1981

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the texts relating to the powers of the Assembly in budgetary matters (1953-76) ;

2. Having taken note of the reply by the Committee of Ministers to its Opinion Nos. 92 (1979) and 93 (1979), on its operational expenditure and on the Council of Europe budget,

3. Regrets that the appropriations under Vote III are limited to only half of what was the increase for 1979, i.e. 1.47% as compared to 2.98%, thus reducing the possibilities of the Assembly to develop its activities even modestly, this situation being all the more regrettable since, as stressed in paragraph 5 of Opinion No. 92, the Assembly in 1980 more than ever needs to see its funds increased in order to strengthen its image in comparison with the directly elected European Parliament ;

4. Further regrets that no positive action was taken on the request for a reinforcement of staff within the Office of the Clerk, and considers the increase granted for the remuneration of temporary staff, representing only two-thirds of the sum requested, as totally insufficient ;

5. Deeply deplores that the Committee of Ministers, in spite of the recognition it gives to the work of the political groups, considered it impossible to increase that particular appropriation and chose to update it only by 7.8%, which increase is less than the current rate of inflation ;

6. Considers it contrary to the principle of a budgetary package to reduce certain sub-heads within the package in case the appropriations for these sub-heads have not been spent, but have instead been used to compensate for shortfalls in other sub-heads within the package ;

7. Adopts accordingly the following opinion concerning its operational expenditure for 1981 (Vote III of the Council of Europe budget) :

1. Assembly debate on 25 April 1980 (8th Sitting) (seeDoc. 4512, report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 1980 (8th Sitting).

Appendix

Summary table of requested increases in real terms for 1981, compared with initial appropriations for 1980

VOTE III - Expenditure pertaining to the Assembly	Initial appropriations for 1980 [2]	Increases in real terms proposed for 1981
HEAD XX - Staff	F	F
Sub-heads		
86 - Salary, allowances and social charges of the Clerk of the Assembly	426 500	
87 - Remuneration of permanent staff	8 193 000	
87 bis - Assembly staffing changes		122 000
88 - Expenses on arrival and departure, home leave	92 000	
89 - Overtime and allowances for exceptional duties	41 000	
90 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis	t.e.	
91 - Remuneration and accessory charges for temporary conference staff	5 098 000	500 000
92 - Provision for cost of living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration	1 291 000	
TOTAL HEAD XX	15 141 500	15 141 500
HEAD XXI - Special Secretariat expenses and other expenses		
93 - Special Secretariat expenses and other expenses	485 000	165 000
HEAD XXII - Supplies, services and other operational expenditure (Budgetary package)	F	F
Sub-heads		
94 - Publishing and printing	839 000	261 000
95 - (see Sub-head 102)		
96 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly	160 000	
97 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly	92 000	
98 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of the members of the Assembly	190 000	
99 - Official journeys	450 000	50 000
100 - Consultation of experts	450 000	
101 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences	254 000	
102 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this Vote and hire of cars	13 000	6 000
	41 000	
103 - Europe Prizes	50 000	
104 - Fixed contribution towards the use of a computer	t.e.	
TOTAL HEAD XXII	2 539 000	317 000
TOTAL VOTE III	18 165 500	1 104 000

Detailed explanations of the increases in real terms requested

Introduction

1. As already explained in earlier opinions, the changes requested for 1981 are to be regarded as increases in real terms over the appropriations made to the Assembly for 1980.

2. As in previous years, the Assembly leaves it to the Secretariat administration to assess in due course, in the same way as for other sectors of the draft budget submitted by the Secretary General, the adjustments to appropriations still required in 1980 as a result of pay scale changes and their consequences for 1981, and also the provisions to be made for pay adjustments in 1981.

3. For these reasons, as in the past, the final estimates for the head concerning staff expenditure are not shown here.

4. Similarly, it will be for the Secretariat to evaluate the effects of inflation on the other 1981 estimates and adjust them accordingly.

5. The estimates entered here under Head XXII (Supplies and services and other operational expenditure), which constitute the budgetary package, will therefore have to be adjusted before the budget is adopted.

6. The Assembly's estimates for 1981 will thus be determined by the total 1980 Assembly appropriations (including the supplementary appropriations voted in the course of the year), to which will be added :

the increases in real terms requested in this opinion ;

the technical adjustments to be made by the Secretariat as indicated in the foregoing paragraphs.

7. Lastly, it is pointed out that the appropriations under Vote III referred to in this opinion relate directly to the operation of the Assembly and do not cover installations, supplies or equipment.

Analysis of estimates according to budget classification

Head XX - Staff

Sub-head 86 - Salary, allowances and social charges of the Clerk of the Assembly

This covers salary, allowances and other charges in respect of the Clerk of the Assembly as provided in Resolution (71) 8 of 26 March 1971, last amended by Resolution (80) 4, of 27 March 1980.

Sub-head 87 - Remuneration of permanent staff

This relates to the staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly (basic salaries, non-recurring and regular allowances, social insurance and pension fund contributions).

The present numerical breakdown of staff is as follows :

Posts	Secretariat of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Private Office of the President	Div. I	Div. II	Div. III	Table Office	Total
A7	1					1
A6		1				1
A5			1	1	1	3
A4		2	3	2		7
A2/A3	1	3	3	4	1	12
B5	1				1	2
B4	1	1			1	3
B3	2	5	4	3	1	15
B2				2		2

Posts	Secretariat of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Private Office of the President	Div. I	Div. II	Div. III	Table Office	Total
Total	6	12	11	12	5	46

Sub-head 87 bis - Staffing changes requested for the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly

Nature of change		Assignment
New post	1B3	Secretariat of committees
Upgradings		
- requested	1 A5 to A6	Table Office
- Pro memoria	2 B2 to B3	Bilingual assistants

Comments

8. Following the increased workload resulting from the geographical enlargement of the Council of Europe, the Assembly drew, in its Opinion No. 82 (1977), the attention of the Committee of Ministers to the need for the creation of a supplementary post A2/A3 of committee secretary and of a B.3 post of bilingual assistant. However, only the A2/A3 has been created, and the Assembly repeated the need for a supplementary bilingual assistant in its Opinions No. 88 (1978) and No. 92 (1979), where it was stressed that at least one of the languages of the newly acceded countries should be represented at assistant level in the Office of the Clerk. The Assembly therefore reiterates the necessity to create a supplementary B3 post of bilingual assistant.

9. When the Table Office was created in 1970, it was headed by an official of grade A5 and its tasks were essentially the following : supervision of the procedure of the plenary debates of the Assembly and co-ordination of the work of temporary staff employed for the session, revision of all the Assembly's documents with a view to ensuring their conformity with existing rules, giving advice on Rules of Procedure to the President of the Assembly, the Bureau, national delegations, members of the Assembly, the Clerk and members of the Clerk's Office as well as the secretariat of the Committee on Rules of Procedure. During the last ten years, however, these tasks have become considerably more burdensome, in particular due to the effort known as the "organisation of debates", the arrival of delegations of parliament of four new member states and the 20% increase in the Assembly's membership resulting therefrom, the preparation of the order of business of sessions, the de facto supervision of the work of the secretariat of the Bureau and the Standing Committee, the supervision of the work of the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations, as well as the co-direction of the European Centre for Parliamentary Documentation and Research, which, on the European Parliament side, is headed by an official having a grade equivalent to A7. Furthermore, the Head of the Table Office is responsible, during sessions, for the work of fifty or so temporary officials, of which at least two have grades equivalent to A5. For all the above reasons the Assembly requests the upgrading of the post of the Head of the Table Office from A5 to A6.

10. Given the requests under points 1 and 2, the Assembly is, however, prepared to forgo for the time being requests it has made since 1973 concerning the upgrading of two B2 posts to B3 level.

Sub-head 88 - Expenses on arrival and departure -home leave

This sub-head covers :

travelling and removal expenses of the staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly and their families on taking up their duties or on their departure ;

settling-in allowance ;

refund of travelling expenses of non-French staff and their families taking home leave.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the 1981 appropriation be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 89 - Overtime - allowances to permanent staff for exceptional duties

This estimate is to cover :

a. overtime worked during sessions of the Assembly by permanent staff in the general departments ;

b. language allowance, until they have been upgraded to B3, for B2 staff in the Office of the Clerk giving proof of an adequate knowledge of the two official languages (Resolution (72) 32) ;

c. allowances payable under Article 12 of the Staff Regulations to officials assuming special responsibilities ;

d. deputising allowances ;

e. expenses of candidates called for recruitment tests.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the 1981 appropriations be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 90 - Staff recruited to fill vacant permanent posts on a temporary basis

This covers remuneration to staff recruited temporarily to the Office of the Clerk to fillpermanent posts which are vacant or not remunerated (long-term illness).

Comments

Since the expenditure will be covered by the transfer of the appropriations available under Sub-head 87, this appropriation appears only as a token entry.

Sub-head 91 - Remuneration and accessory charges in respect of temporary staff

This covers remuneration and social charges for temporary staff (session staff, workshop staff, messengers, technicians, translators and above all interpreters) assigned to the Office of the Clerk during the sessions and meetings of the Assembly and its committees scheduled in the programme for 1981 at the time of drafting this opinion.

Comments

11. The Assembly feels it necessary to point out that it considers the appropriation under this sub-head entirely insufficient in the light of the expansion of its activities in the last few years. In 1978 the sub-head showed a deficit of 280 000 F, and in 1979 the deficit was 350 000 F. As has been expressed in Opinion No. 92, this was due to unavoidable expenditure, incurred in the organisation of meetings which committees are obliged to hold in order to liquidate an order of business which necessarily becomes more time-consuming as the number of members grows. It must be recalled that if a fourth part-session were to be added to the Assembly's calendar, another 100 000 F would have to be added to Subhead 91. It has been possible to avoid such a measure only by prolonging the yearly mini-session, this being less costly than holding a supplementary part-session in Strasbourg. The Assembly therefore cannot accept the proposal made by the Committee of Ministers in reply to Opinion No. 92, i.e. to rationalise the use of temporary staff and to accept an increase of only 200 000 F instead of 290 000 F. Lastly, it must be recalled that the overspending under this sub-head in 1978 and 1979 was possible only because of highly unusual circumstances. As a result of these, some posts in the Office of the Clerk were left vacant, which made it possible to effectuate transfers within Head XX. When this opinion is being drafted, the full impact in the year 1980 cannot be foretold in detail, but it is certain that the appropriation will prove insufficient. The Assembly therefore requests an increase of at least 500 000 F in real terms.

12. As is customary, the Assembly reserves itself the right to submit a supplementary estimate, if it should decide to alter its timetable for 1981 within the statutory limit.

Sub-head 92 - Provision for cost-of-living allowance and other adjustments to remuneration

The estimate under this sub-head is to cover adjustments to the remuneration of staff allocated to the Office of the Clerk made after the date of completion of the draft budget (see also Introduction above).

Sub-head 93 - Special Secretariat expenses and other expenses

Estimate for 1981	650 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	485 000 F
Increase	165 000 F

This is to cover "miscellaneous expenses incurred by members of the Assembly in the discharge of specific duties for the Council of Europe, such as those for secretariat assistance, documentation and travel" (Resolution (58) 4 of the Committee of Ministers, of 27 March 1958). The appropriation is allocated to the political groups of the Assembly according to a key of apportionment decided upon by the Bureau of the Assembly.

Comments

As pointed out in paragraph 5 of this opinion, the Assembly deplores that the Committee of Ministers did not see fit to increase the appropriation under this subhead. As a result, political groups will not be in a position to achieve even the more modest among their

aims, nor will they be able to carry out all the programmes planned for 1980. In order to make up for the increase of 35 000 F granted for 1980, which in fact does not even meet current inflation, the Assembly is of the opinion that for 1981 the overall allocation should be brought to at least 650 000 F, so as to represent a sufficient increase in real terms.

Budgetary package

HEAD XXII - Supplies and services and other operational expenditure

Sub-head 94 - Publishing and printing

Estimate for 1981	1 100 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	839 000 F
Increase	261 000 F

This covers publishing and printing costs relating to :

official Assembly documents, i.e. :

1 200 bilingual copies of the documents (Working Papers) (2 800-3 000 pages) ;

900 copies in each official language of the Official Report of Debates (1 200-1 400 pages) ;

distribution of reports and documents adopted by the Assembly and its committees, and circulation and translation by national parliaments of certain texts adopted.

Comments

Again, experience has shown that the appropriation for this sub-head has not been by any means sufficient. In 1979, the shortfall was over 280 000 F, and only thanks to the circumstances described under the section on Sub-head 91 above was it possible to effectuate transfers within Vote III and thereby compensate for the shortfall in question. Given that this expenditure, too, is of an unavoidable character, the Assembly asks for an increase of 261 000 F in real terms.

Sub-head 95 - Hire of cars

Appropriation in 1980	13 000 F

Hire of cars for the Assembly.

Comments

The exact needs of the Assembly for the purpose of this sub-head may vary considerably from one year to another, depending on the number of high personalities who visit the Assembly. It is, therefore, proposed that this appropriation be included in Sub-head 102 ("Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this Vote"), to allow for greater flexibility.

Sub-head 96 - Representational, travelling and subsistence expenses of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1981	160 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	160 000 F

These are representational, travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by the President of the Assembly in the performance of his duties :

a. fixed representation allowance ;

b. travel and subsistence.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1981 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 97 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly

Estimate for 1981	92 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	92 000 F

Estimate to cover :

1. official travel by Private Office staff or staff travelling on the President's request or for his needs ;
2. remuneration of a shorthand-typist for the President and other secretarial expenses ;
3. special duties allowance ; iv. sundry secretarial expenses.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1981 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 98 - Representational expenditure. other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly

Estimate for 1981	190 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	190 000 F

This sub-head covers :

entertainment and similar expenses incurred by the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, committee chairmen and rapporteurs ;

travelling expenses and subsistence allowances of members of the Assembly attending meetings of certain Council of Europe bodies (other than sessions of the Assembly and meetings of Assembly committees) on the Council's behalf or travelling on Assembly business ;

accident insurance premium for members of the Assembly travelling officially at the Council's expense.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1981 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 99 - Official journeys

Estimate for 1981	500 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	450 000 F
Increase	50.000 F

Official travel by the staff of the Office of the Clerk and other Secretariat staff required to attend meetings of Assembly bodies.

Comments

The Assembly appreciates that this appropriation has been considerably increased from 1979 to 1980 but observes that in spite of efforts to limit travelling expenses to a minimum, the appropriation was short of 134 000 F. As mentioned in Opinion No. 92, this situation can be explained partly by the need to travel more to peripheral countries, partly by the disproportionate rise in travelling costs in and outside Europe. Furthermore, as has already been mentioned in the comments to Sub-head 91, the yearly four-day mini-session, which today provides the only alternative to a further part-session, costs in itself approximately 75 000 F. The Assembly therefore asks for an increase of 50 000 F under this sub-head for 1981.

Sub-head 100 - Consultation of experts

Estimate for 1981	450 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	450 000 F

This is to cover fees, travelling expenses, subsistence allowances and administrative assistance for experts, including those from non-member states, asked to carry out technical work or called in for consultation by Assembly bodies, either individually or in working parties. It is also intended to finance the scientific cooperation programme launched by the Assembly at the instigation of the Committee on Science and Technology.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriations for 1981 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 101 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences

Estimate for 1981	254 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	254 000 F

This is to cover the organisation of conferences, colloquies, symposia or seminars, including the travelling and subsistence expenses of those taking part, as well as publishing, translation and printing costs (in non-official languages also) and the entertainment and other expenses incidental to those meetings.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriations for 1981 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 102 : Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this Vote (including hire of cars)

Estimate for 1981		60 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	41 000 F	
	+ 13 000 F	54 000 F
Increase		6 000 F

Refreshments for staff on night duty, hire of cars, gratuities for special work, medals, flags and poles, etc.

Comments

The appropriation for this sub-head has not changed since 1979 and is now insufficient, especially as the expenditure for flags and poles is no longer borne by the Directorate of Press and Information. Savings under other sub-heads have, however, in the past allowed for certain compensation. The Assembly, on the one hand, would therefore ask that the hire of cars be included under this sub-head and, on the other, considers that an increase of 6 000 F would be necessary to cover the above-mentioned additional expenses.

Sub-head 103 - Europe Prizes

Estimate for 1981	50 000 F
Appropriation in 1980	50 000 F

a. Europe Prize ;

b. Council of Europe Museum Prize ;

c. Expenses connected with the presentation of the prizes, including dinners, receptions, flowers, diplomas, insurances, etc.

Comments

The Assembly requests that the appropriation for 1981 be maintained at the same level in real terms as for 1980.

Sub-head 104 - Fixed contribution towards the cost of using a computer

Token entry

As mentioned in earlier opinions, the Assembly is prepared to be associated in the form of a fixed contribution to the use of a computer, for which it has expressed its interest.