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Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017

Report¹

Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs
Rapporteur: Mr Rudy SALLES, France, Group of the European People's Party

Summary

The Parliamentary Assembly will pursue its action and continue to perform its key missions in 2016 and 2017. The principle of zero nominal growth applied to member States' contributions, if maintained for the next biennium, will oblige the Assembly to freeze part of its staff expenditure. However, the prospect of Turkey's becoming a major contributor to the budgets of the Council of Europe could offer a means of avoiding this constraint. The question of increasing the number of seats allocated to the Turkish parliamentary delegation and introducing Turkish as a new working language is also raised and should be settled by 1 January 2016; these changes will necessarily entail a reinforcement of the Assembly's financial resources.

1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision, Reference 4098 of 26 January 2015.



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A. Draft resolution²

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 each year 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 and the functioning of its political groups. Since 2010, the Assembly has been presenting the opinion concerning its own expenditure in the form of a resolution.
2. The Assembly is aware that the next biennial budget of the Council of Europe is to be adopted against the difficult background of consolidation in the public finances of the member States and takes note of the Committee of Ministers' decision to continue applying the principle of zero nominal growth over the 2016-2017 biennium. It nonetheless regrets this decision, in view of the relatively small burden which contributions to the Council of Europe's budgets represent for the member States and also taking into account the repayments made by the Council of Europe in respect of budgetary surpluses or participation in the earnings of the European Pharmacopoeia.
3. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to give careful thought to the medium-term consequences of this budgetary stagnation, which could be dramatic for the Council of Europe, since the Organisation could find itself no longer able to meet its obligations (including in terms of investments in new technology and in the upkeep of its buildings) and hence to fulfil its role and its commitments towards the member States.
4. The Assembly wishes to reiterate that, in recent years, it has contributed to the policy of reducing costs, both in terms of staff-related expenditure and in terms of operational expenditure. However, it could not accept that, on account of this policy of strict budget neutrality, the Committee of Ministers might be tempted to make further cuts in its budget that may endanger its very functioning.
5. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the Turkish authorities' decision to reinforce the Council of Europe by proposing to become a "major contributor". It urges the member States to accept this proposal without reducing the amount of their own contributions to the Organisation's different budgets.
6. For its part, the Assembly has taken note of the motion for a recommendation tabled by members of the Assembly on the allocation of seats in the Parliamentary Assembly in respect of Turkey, a proposal which aims to remedy the consequences of this country's under-representation (in terms of its population, Turkey ranks third among the Council of Europe member States) by setting the number of seats to which Turkey is entitled at 18 and by including Turkish among the Assembly's working languages.
7. The adoption of Turkish as a working language of the Assembly would result in an estimated €0.7 million increase in expenditure, which could be met only with additional financial resources since the current budget of the Assembly cannot cover such an expense.
8. For the forthcoming 2016-2017 budget cycle, the Assembly will continue its activities within the framework of its key missions, namely:
 - 8.1. monitoring and reinforcing the effectiveness of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), including the role played by human rights defenders in the member States;
 - 8.2. monitoring and reinforcing the effectiveness of the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163) and of the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201);
 - 8.3. ensuring the honouring of obligations entered into by the member States and of the commitments made by their authorities;
 - 8.4. pursuing its examination of issues linked to mixed migratory flows, including the conditions of detention and of removal of migrants;
 - 8.5. considering the societal challenges posed by the information society and Internet governance, and more generally the notion of living together in diversity;
 - 8.6. improving participation by members of the Assembly, while strengthening interaction between the Assembly and the national parliaments, as well as parliaments having or wishing to obtain partner for democracy status (in particular those of Jordan and Tunisia);

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 26 March 2015

- 8.7. strengthening the capacity for European inter-parliamentary co-operation, including enhanced participation in certain joint programmes (in particular those concerning the southern Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership and the enlargement partnerships).
9. Over the 2016-2017 biennium, the Assembly will focus on:
 - 9.1. general policy measures: with stricter preselection of resolutions and recommendations reflecting the Assembly's concerns, so as to ensure better follow-up to adopted texts within the national parliaments, and greater awareness of these texts not only in parliaments of member States but also in parliaments which enjoy observer or partner for democracy status;
 - 9.2. communication and media: by improving media coverage and by making debates more interesting and more lively (for example by means of free debates and the questions put to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe); in addition, the Assembly will pursue its modernisation effort, particularly through technical developments concerning its website and a reinforced presence on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. This policy also seeks to improve integration of Assembly members, so that their work within the Assembly is given a higher profile on their own websites and social media accounts;
 - 9.3. working methods: by switching to electronic production of Assembly documents with a structured format in XML, so as to guarantee automated publication and distribution of documents and improve management of documents data;
 - 9.4. regular adaptation of its Rules of Procedure and its working methods to new developments (in particular those resulting from the introduction of new technology).
10. The Assembly will also continue to support certain awareness-raising campaigns on key themes, including in particular:
 - 10.1. the Parliamentary Network "Women Free from Violence";
 - 10.2. the anti-corruption platform;
 - 10.3. the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance;
 - 10.4. the Parliamentary Campaign to End Child Immigration Detention (launched in 2015).
11. Lastly, 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 (Commissioner for Human Rights, judges of the European Court of Human Rights), promoting the various European distinctions it awards (the Europe Prize, the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, the Museum Prize) and observing elections.
12. With reference to interparliamentary co-operation, the Assembly draws attention to the work carried out by the Parliamentary Projects Support Division of the Assembly secretariat, which has enabled the development and the implementation of new assistance and co-operation programmes suited to the needs of parliamentary institutions, in close co-operation with the committee secretariats. In 2014, the secretariat of the Assembly received and/or managed €329 600 in voluntary contributions for its thematic activities.
13. The Assembly wishes to express its sincere appreciation to those member States and their parliaments (in particular Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and Switzerland) which, through their contributions, have enabled it to finance activities relating in particular to the promotion of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention") and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, "Lanzarote Convention"), the modernisation of the Europe Prize and the renown of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.
14. Lastly, the Assembly expects the Turkish authorities' decision to propose to become a "major contributor" to be approved by the Committee of Ministers without any counterbalancing exercise, thereby avoiding further staff cuts and giving the Council of Europe the resources it needs to provide a more appropriate response to the challenges facing our continent following the serious crises caused by the breaches of the rule of law and human rights violations that are taking place within Europe.
15. Finally, the Assembly hopes that the investment budget will not be reduced in the draft biennial budget and that the plans to modernise the Assembly Chamber and the Council of Europe's Paris Office will be pursued.

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:³ two of these committees have 89 members (the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, which also has 84 alternates, and the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe, which has no alternates), five others have 84 members (and 84 alternates), the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs has 37 members (and no alternates) and the new Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights has 20 members (and 20 alternates). As at 1 January 2015, the secretariat comprised 85 permanent posts, 5 structural fixed-term positions, 1 fixed-term position in respect of a programme and 1 specially appointed official, broken down as follows:

Permanent posts:	
1 specially appointed official	
1 A7	1 B6
1 A6	5 B5
8 A5	10 B4
11 A4	17 B3
23 A2/A3	8 B2
Positions:	
4 A2/A3	1 B5 (programme)
	1 B3

3. At present, the secretariat of the Assembly is organised so that the nine Assembly committees have 49 staff working for them (including 29 A-grade and 19 B-grade permanent staff members on posts and 1 B-grade staff member on a fixed-term position).

4. The remaining 43 staff members (1 specially appointed official, 42 permanent 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. In view of the current situation regarding staff expenses and in the event of the continuation of zero nominal growth in the draft budget for the 2016-2017 biennium, the Assembly is preparing itself to meet the requirement that it reduce its staff expenditure by freezing three posts or positions. However, the prospect of an increase in Turkey's contribution to the budgets of the Council of Europe gives a reason to hope that this freeze will not prove necessary and, on the contrary, that a structural reinforcement may prove possible.

Supplies, services and other operational expenditure

6. In recent years, the Assembly has made substantial savings by rationalising its work to reduce its operational expenditure. Since 2005, the Assembly's overall budget has been falling steadily in constant terms.

7. The Parliamentary Projects Support Division has permitted the development and the implementation of new assistance and co-operation programmes suited to the needs of parliamentary institutions, in close co-operation with the Assembly committees. This division is also tasked with co-ordinating, along with the Directorate General of Programmes, the implementation of interparliamentary co-operation activities funded via joint programmes with the European Union (the South Programme and the European Eastern Partnership). The co-operation activities pursued make it possible to respond to the specific needs of the parliaments of Council of Europe member States or those enjoying partner for democracy status. In 2014, the Assembly received and/or managed €329 600 in voluntary contributions for its thematic activities.

3. The Assembly transformed its Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights into a full committee with 20 seats on 1 January 2015 (see Rule 44.1 of the Rules of Procedure).

8. In parallel with the co-operation activities, the Assembly has decided to support certain awareness-raising campaigns on key themes, such as:

- the Parliamentary Network “Women free from violence” whose aim is to promote the Istanbul Convention and to assist with the organisation of events at national level and visibility events supported by network members;
- the anti-corruption platform established in April 2014 to cover the Assembly's work in this field;
- the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, a network of parliamentarians set up in January 2015, whose members undertake to campaign against racism, hatred and intolerance, in co-operation with their national parliaments, at the national and European levels.

9. As regards external communication and visibility, the Assembly will continue its modernisation efforts, through technical developments concerning its website and a reinforced presence on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. This policy also seeks to improve integration of Assembly members, so that their work within the Assembly is given a higher profile on their own websites and social media accounts.

10. 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.

11. To sum up, the draft budget for 2016 and 2017 in real terms (not including inflation, salary adjustments and the possible freezing of three posts), which includes pension contributions for staff, amounts to:

Year	Staff ⁴	Other expenditure	Total
2016	€11 285 400	€5 318 200	€16 603 600
2017	€11 285 400	€5 318 200	€16 603 600
For information, the budget for 2015:			
2015	€11 285 400	€5 318 200	€16 603 600

12. Finally, although the financial situation is difficult, the Assembly thanks the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for the work done to modernise the Assembly Chamber (in particular the replacement of the electronic voting system and the refurbishment of the presidential rostrum). It hopes that this modernisation effort will be continued in the coming years, depending on the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan. This should concern in particular refurbishing of the public gallery and changing of the Assembly Chamber seats. It should also be noted that the introduction of a sixth working language for the Assembly will require some adaptation work in the Paris Office.

4. Including pension contributions.

Appendix 2 – Functioning of the Assembly

Intervention logic	Performance indicators
<p>Expected result 1 The part-sessions are efficiently organised and executed in line with Assembly members' expectations.</p>	<p>At least 70% of registered speakers have been able to take the floor. Adopted texts are transmitted to organisations concerned within the specified deadlines.</p>
<p>Expected result 2 Committee meetings, hearings and conferences take place in conformity with members' decisions.</p>	<p>2016-2017: no more than 10 meetings per committee are held each year. The impact of texts adopted by the Assembly is monitored at national parliament level.</p>
<p>Expected result 3 Interparliamentary co-operation, observation of elections and assistance to national parliaments are managed according to political events.</p>	<p>Proposed co-operation programmes are drawn up which are designed to meet the specific needs of parliaments and attract voluntary contributions. Election observation missions are organised in accordance with decisions of the Bureau of the Assembly.</p>
<p>Expected result 4 The visibility of the Assembly is improved in the different member States.</p>	<p>Activities of the Assembly are reflected in the media, with at least 1 300 articles every year in the print media (according to the Directorate of Communication's press review statistics). 2% increase in the number of external users of the Assembly's website and in the number of subscribers to its Facebook and Twitter accounts.</p>

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Salles, rapporteur

1. Overview of the expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly

1. This report gives a complete overview of the Parliamentary Assembly's expenditure for the budget years 2016 and 2017. 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 budgetary allocations for costs associated with staff expenditure and the functioning of the political groups. The budgetary appropriation does not, however, cover landline telephone bills, office supplies and equipment or other consumables, which are items of expenditure common to all departments within the Organisation.

2. The proposals regarding the amount to be allocated to the Assembly for 2016 and 2017 have been made in accordance with the decision to draw up the budget and programme of the Council of Europe on a biennial basis for these two years.

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 Assembly's part-sessions, held at a frequency of three meetings per year;
- meetings, at times other than the four part-sessions of the Assembly, for each of the nine general committees, the sub-committees, the ad hoc committees of the Assembly or of the Bureau and specialised working parties;
- committee or sub-committee meetings outside Strasbourg or Paris;
- conferences, colloquies, seminars and parliamentary hearings;
- activities coming under the Assembly's programme of interparliamentary co-operation;
- visits by rapporteurs in the framework of 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. The member States are divided as regards their attitude towards the Council of Europe. Some seem in favour of a very hard-line approach (pursuit of zero nominal growth). This attitude is even more difficult to comprehend since the Council of Europe is a fairly well-managed organisation and, each year, leaves a positive balance of about 0.7% in its ordinary budget (an average of €1.77 million). This amount is repaid to the member States, reducing their contributions to the Council of Europe's budgets for the following year. In addition to this reimbursement, an amount of over €3.8 million per year is refunded to the member States of the European Pharmacopoeia.

5. If the member States of the Council of Europe decide to continue to apply the principle of zero nominal growth for the second biennium running in 2016 and 2017, in particular as regards member States' contributions, all of the administrative entities of the Council of Europe will have to reduce their staff expenditure (by freezing posts or positions) so as to absorb the impact of the 2015 salary adjustment. For the Assembly, this effort represents a sum of €176 200, corresponding to the freezing of a position for an administrative officer (A2/A3) and of two posts for assistants (B2).

6. In parallel with this risk, attention must be drawn to the Turkish authorities' request to join the group of member States that are "major contributors" to the Organisation's budgets in respect of the totality of their contributions. If the Committee of Ministers accepts this proposal, the Secretary General could be led to review his position concerning the freezing of posts and positions. It should also be noted that the Turkish authorities have officially requested the Assembly to increase to 18 the number of seats allotted to their delegation. The question of making Turkish a working language of the Assembly has also been raised. If this decision is taken, the cost, estimated at €0.7 million, could be met only if Turkey becomes a "major contributor".

7. It should be recalled that the Assembly has already made substantial savings in recent years in terms of its staff and operational expenditure. In the 2014-2015 biennium the Assembly eliminated two permanent posts (an A6 post for a director and a C4 post for a messenger), downgraded a permanent post from A5 to A4

and reduced its operational expenses by €80 000. The proportion which the budget of the Assembly represents in the total ordinary budget of the Council of Europe has continued to decrease steadily since 2005.

8. To sum up, the draft budget for 2016 and 2017 (see appendix for details of expenditure) in real terms (not including salary adjustments), and excluding the freezing of three posts or positions, amounts to:

- **2016:** €16 603 600
- **2017:** €16 603 600

The appropriations can be analysed as follows:

2016		2017
9 932 800 €	Permanent and temporary staff	9 938 800 €
4 578 200 €	Activities	4 578 200 €
740 000 €	Allocation to the political groups	740 000 €
1 352 600 €	Contribution to the pensions budget	1 352 600 €
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16 603 600 €	Total	16 603 600 €

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

10. Lastly, although the financial situation is difficult, the Assembly wishes the work to modernise the Assembly Chamber to be continued in the coming years, depending on the funds available in the Council of Europe's investment plan. This should concern, in particular, refurbishing the public gallery and changing the Assembly Chamber seats. It should also be noted that the introduction of a sixth working language for the Assembly will require some adaptation work in Room 1 of the Paris Office.

Appendix – Expenditure of the Assembly

Parliamentary democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly <i>Démocratie parlementaire – Dépenses relatives à l'Assemblée</i>	Appropriations for 2015 <i>Crédits inscrits au budget de 2015</i> EUROS	Appropriations for 2016 <i>Crédits demandés au budget de 2016</i> EUROS	Appropriations for 2017 <i>Crédits demandés au budget de 2017</i> EUROS
HEAD 0310 – Functioning of the Assembly			
CHAPITRE 0310 – Fonctionnement de l'Assemblée			
Staff expenditure / <i>Dépenses de personnel</i>			
0000001 – Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts <i>Rémunération du personnel recruté dans le cadre des emplois permanents</i>	8 639 800 €	8 639 800 €	8 639 800 €
0000003 – Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary staff <i>Rémunération et charges accessoires du personnel temporaire</i>	521 800 €	521 800 €	521 800 €
0000046 – Remuneration of staff on position <i>Rémunération du personnel sur fonction à durée déterminée</i>	488 000 €	488 000 €	488 000 €
0000005 – Salary, allowances and social charges of the Secretary General of the Assembly <i>Rémunération, indemnités et charges sociales du Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée</i>	255 700 €	255 700 €	255 700 €
0000016 – Recruitment, arrival and departure expenses – Home leave <i>Frais de recrutement à l'arrivée et au départ – congé dans le pays d'origine</i>	27 500 €	27 500 €	27 500 €
0000379 – Contribution to the Pension budget <i>Contribution au budget des pensions</i>	1 352 600 €	1 352 600 €	1 352 600 €
Total Staff expenditure <i>Total Dépenses de personnel</i>	11 285 400 €	11 285 400 €	11 285 400 €
Supplies, services and other operational expenditure / <i>Dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement</i>			
Activity 1 General operational expenditure			
<i>Activité 1 Dépenses opérationnelles générales</i>			
Equipment – telecommunication costs <i>Équipement – dépenses de télécommunications</i>	11 200 €	11 200 €	11 200 €
Official journeys <i>Frais de missions</i>	263 100 €	263 100 €	263 100 €
Representational expenditure, other official travelling expenses of members of the Assembly <i>Dépenses de représentation, frais de déplacement des membres de l'Assemblée</i>	146 700 €	146 700 €	146 700 €
Prepress <i>Pré-presse</i>	43 900 €	43 900 €	43 900 €
Interpretation <i>Interprétation</i>	687 400 €	687 400 €	687 400 €
Translation <i>Traduction</i>	558 600 €	558 600 €	558 600 €
Publishing and printing <i>Publications et impressions</i>	301 500 €	301 500 €	301 500 €
Outsourced production of documents <i>Production externalisée de documents</i>	5 000 €	5 000 €	5 000 €
Consultation of experts <i>Consultation d'experts</i>	47 800 €	47 800 €	47 800 €

Parliamentary democracy – Expenditure of the Assembly <i>Démocratie parlementaire – Dépenses relatives à l'Assemblée</i>	Appropriations for 2015 <i>Crédits inscrits au budget de 2015</i> EUROS	Appropriations for 2016 <i>Crédits demandés au budget de 2016</i> EUROS	Appropriations for 2017 <i>Crédits demandés au budget de 2017</i> EUROS
Organisation of ad hoc conferences <i>Organisation de conférences ad hoc</i>	105 700 €	105 700 €	105 700 €
Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment <i>Modernisation de l'équipement de l'Assemblée</i>	89 400 €	89 400 €	89 400 €
Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote <i>Autres dépenses non spécialement prévues au présent titre</i>	7 000 €	7 000 €	7 000 €
Activity 2 Expenses linked to the session <i>Activité 2 Dépenses liées à la session</i>			
Expenses linked to part-sessions <i>Dépenses liées aux parties de session</i>	362 900 €	362 900 €	362 900 €
Interpretation linked to part-sessions <i>Interprétation liée aux parties de session</i>	1 130 600 €	1 130 600 €	1 130 600 €
Operating and maintenance costs of the electronic voting system <i>Coûts de maintenance et d'exploitation du vote électronique</i>	40 800 €	40 800 €	40 800 €
Activity 3 Co-operation and monitoring <i>Activité 3 Coopération et suivi des engagements</i>			
Co-operation (including observation elections) and monitoring <i>Coopération (y compris observation des élections) et du suivi des engagements</i>	459 800 €	459 800 €	459 800 €
Interpretation – seminars and visits <i>Interprétation – séminaires et visites</i>	77 900 €	77 900 €	77 900 €
Activity 4 Expenditure of the Presidency <i>Activités 4 Dépenses de la Présidence</i>			
Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly <i>Dépenses du Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée</i>	63 000 €	63 000 €	63 000 €
Official expenses of the President of the Assembly <i>Frais de fonction du Président de l'Assemblée</i>	94 300 €	94 300 €	94 300 €
Activity 5 Political Groups <i>Activité 5 Groupes politiques</i>			
Allocation to Assembly's political groups <i>Dotation des groupes politiques de l'Assemblée</i>	740 000 €	740 000 €	740 000 €
Activity 6 European Prizes <i>Activité 6 Prix européens</i>			
European prizes expenditure <i>Dépenses liées aux prix européens</i>	81 600 €	81 600 €	81 600 €
Total supplies, services and other operational expenditure <i>Total dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement</i>	5 318 200 €	5 318 200 €	5 318 200 €
TOTAL Parliamentary Assembly <i>TOTAL Assemblée parlementaire</i>	16 603 600 €	16 603 600 €	16 603 600 €