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P8_TA(2015)0172

Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016 — Section I — Parliament

European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016 (2015/2012(BUD))

(2016/C 346/40)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 36 thereof,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management ⁽³⁾, and in particular point 27 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1023/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 amending the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolutions of 23 October 2013 ⁽⁵⁾ and of 22 October 2014 ⁽⁶⁾ on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial years 2014 and 2015 respectively,
- having regard to the Secretary-General's report to the Bureau on drawing up Parliament's preliminary draft estimates for the financial year 2016,
- having regard to the preliminary draft estimates drawn up by the Bureau on 27 April 2015,
- having regard to the draft estimates drawn up by the Committee on Budgets pursuant to Rule 96(2) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to Rules 96 and 97 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A8-0144/2015),

A. whereas this procedure is the first full budgetary procedure conducted in the new legislature and the third procedure of the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF);

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 373, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 287, 29.10.2013, p. 15.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0437.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0036.

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- B. whereas at its meeting of 9 February 2015 the Bureau endorsed the guidelines for the 2016 budget, as proposed by the Secretary-General; whereas those guidelines are focused on strengthening the capacity of the parliamentary committees to scrutinise the executive, in particular as regards delegated acts; security investments in Parliament's buildings and cybersecurity; and support for Members, in particular as regards parliamentary assistance;
- C. whereas a budget of EUR 1 850 470 600 has been proposed by the Secretary-General for Parliament's preliminary draft estimates for 2016, representing a 3,09 % increase on the 2015 budget and 19,51 % of heading V of the 2014-2020 MFF;
- D. whereas, in the context of a heavy burden of public debt and fiscal consolidation that Member States are currently facing, Parliament should show budgetary responsibility and self-restraint while ensuring sufficient resources are provided to allow it to exercise all its powers and ensure a proper functioning of the institution;
- E. whereas, despite little room for manoeuvre and the need to counterbalance savings in other areas, certain investments should be considered in order to strengthen the institutional role of the Parliament;
- F. whereas the ceiling for heading V of the MFF for the 2016 budget is EUR 9 483 million in current prices;
- G. whereas conciliation meetings between delegations of the Bureau and of the Committee on Budgets took place on 24 March and 14 and 15 April 2015;

General framework and overall budget

- 1. Welcomes the good cooperation between the Bureau of the European Parliament and the Committee on Budgets established during the current budgetary procedure and the agreement reached during the conciliation process;
- 2. Notes the priority objectives proposed by the Secretary-General for 2016;
- 3. Recalls that, since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, significant additional expenditure has been borne by Parliament's budget, as a result of the following developments: the establishment of the European Parliament as a true co-legislator and the enhanced building policy (2010-2012), the accession of Croatia, the House of European History (2013), the establishment of the Parliament's research service (2014-2015); welcomes that Parliament was able to offset a major part of this expenditure through savings stemming from structural and organisational reforms, thus leading to only moderate budgetary increases around the inflation rate;
- 4. Notes that, during the past legislature, Parliament agreed on a number of political priorities, which gave rise either to moderate budgetary increases or to budgetary savings; considers that the newly elected Parliament should scrutinise in depth the implementation of those multiannual projects and decide, on that basis, on its own political priorities, including, if necessary, the negative ones; requests, in this respect, the Secretary-General to present an assessment report on those multiannual projects in due time before the Parliament's reading in autumn 2015;
- 5. Considers that for 2016 priority should be given to the reinforcement of parliamentary work, in particular by enhancing Parliament's legislative work as well as its capacity to scrutinise the executive, and the reinforcement of Parliament's security of buildings and cybersecurity;
- 6. Is of the opinion that Parliament should be exemplary, making particular efforts as regards the size of its budget and the level of increase in expenditure compared to 2015; stresses that the 2016 budget should be set on a realistic basis and should be in line with the principles of budgetary discipline and sound financial management;

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7. Considers that the structural and organisational reforms aimed at achieving greater efficiency, environmental sustainability, and effectiveness should continue through the thorough examination of possible synergies and savings; recalls the substantial savings that could be made by having only one place of work instead of three (Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg); underlines that this process should be lead without endangering Parliament's legislative excellence, its budgetary powers and powers of scrutiny, or the quality of working conditions for Members, assistants, and staff;

8. Stresses that, in order to allow the Members of Parliament to fulfil their mandate and to empower Parliament's capacity to exercise all its powers, a sufficient level of resources should be ensured; underlines that the statutory and compulsory expenditure needed for 2016 must be covered;

9. Welcomes that the share of Parliament's budget in the total MFF heading V was, with the exception of 2011 and 2014, below 20 % during the past legislature; considers that the share of Parliament's budget in 2016 should also be maintained under 20 %;

10. Is of the opinion that the total increase in expenditure of the Parliament's budget for 2016, compared to 2015, should be determined by the following two factors:

(i) the rate of increase in the current expenditure, which cannot exceed 1,6 %;

(ii) the level of exceptional expenditure needed in 2016 to reinforce the security of the Parliament's buildings and cybersecurity in Brussels for a maximum amount of EUR 15 million;

stresses that, to this purpose, savings in other areas are necessary;

11. Welcomes the agreement on savings reached between the Committee on Budgets and the Bureau's delegations at the conciliation meetings of 14 and 15 April 2015, as compared to the level of the preliminary draft estimates originally suggested by the Bureau;

12. Sets the level of its current/functioning expenditure for the year 2016 to EUR 1 823 648 600, which corresponds to 1,6 % increase over the 2015 budget, and adds to its draft estimates the exceptional extraordinary expenditure amounting to EUR 15 million requested in 2016 to reinforce the security of its buildings in Brussels as well as the cybersecurity of the Parliament;

13. Seizes the opportunity of this first fully fledged conciliation process on the Parliament's budget under the 8th legislature to ask the Secretary-General and the Bureau to present medium and long term budgetary planning, together with the documents relating to the procedure for the establishment of the budget for 2017; asks the Secretary-General to clearly indicate the spending relating to investments (buildings, acquisitions, etc.) and the spending relating to the functioning of the Parliament and its statutory obligations;

14. Recalls that Parliament, in the context of the budgetary procedure, has the possibility to adjust the budgetary priorities and will take the final decision in autumn 2015;

Specific issues

Priority to parliamentary work

15. Underlines that, following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which has established the Parliament as a true co-legislator, and given the fact that one of the most important tasks of the Parliament is to control the executive, it is now absolutely essential to put the emphasis on the legislative and scrutiny work of Members;

16. Considers that, in order to consolidate the role of the Parliament, the administrative capacity of the secretariats of the specialised parliamentary committees should, where it has not yet been done, be reinforced accordingly, by means of redeployment;

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17. Believes that, in order to ensure adequate support to the Members for the accomplishment of their parliamentary activities, a new balance is necessary between accredited parliamentary assistants and local assistants; requests the Secretary-General to present a proposal for a decision to the Bureau to this end as soon as possible; believes that a transition period should be respected in the case of the revision of the current rules and expects that the final decision will enter into force as of July 2016 at the latest;

18. Highlights the need for a greater transparency as regards the general expenditure allowance for Members; calls on the Parliament's Bureau to work on the definition of more precise rules regarding the accountability of the expenditure authorised under this allowance, without generating additional costs to the Parliament.

19. Recalls that, according to the Rule 130 of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure, the Conference of Presidents shall carry out, by July 2015, an assessment of the regime of written questions in respect of additional questions; underlines the fact that focus on statistics of parliamentary work should not be to the detriment of Members' actual legislative work; calls, therefore, for a revision of that regime and calls upon the competent authority to:

- limit, for each Member, the number of parliamentary questions submitted in electronic format to a maximum of five questions per month (not taking into account the co-authors);
- abolish the possibility to submit any additional questions in the form of a paper document tabled and signed personally by the Member;

20. Stresses that such a revision of Parliament's Rules of Procedure governing questions for written answer (Rule 130) can generate savings and will limit the administrative burden of the European institutions without endangering the legislative powers of the European Parliament; expects the revised rules to be applicable as of January 2016;

21. Considers that the renewal of furniture in all Members and staff work space is not a priority for the 2016 budget;

Security

22. Emphasises that, in the current context, the highest priority should be given to the security of the Parliament's premises; underlines that Parliament will need to take the new measures necessary to reinforce security inside and outside its premises, while remaining an 'open-house' for European citizens, as well as cyber-security;

23. Requests, in this regard, the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets a global evaluation of the security measures taken so far by the Parliament and the budgetary consequences of such measures, since the decision to internalise Parliament security services (Bureau decision dated June 2012) and to outline the measures envisaged to reinforce Parliament's security inside and outside of its premises, as well as the impact of such measures on the 2016 budget; calls for information on the financial consequences of the interinstitutional administrative cooperation arrangements in the field of security;

Cybersecurity

24. Is of the opinion that, due to an increasing use of electronic media and equipment, particular attention should be paid to IT security to ensure the maximum possible level of security of its information and communication systems; considers that any measure in this field should be based on a clear evaluation of Parliament's needs and decided in the context of the budgetary procedure;

Building policy

25. Recalls that the mid-term building strategy, which was adopted by the Bureau in 2010, is currently under revision; invites the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets the new mid-term strategy on buildings as soon as possible and at the latest by August 2015, before the Parliament's reading of the budget in autumn 2015;

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26. Reiterates that long-term investments, such as Parliament's building projects, need to be handled prudently and transparently; insists on strict cost management, project planning and supervision; reiterates its call for a transparent decision-making process in the field of buildings policy, based on early information, having due regard to Article 203 of the Financial Regulation;

27. Invites the Vice Presidents responsible to present to the Committee in charge the new mid-term strategy on buildings as well as a progress report on the KAD building, including financing options; on this basis will decide during the reading of the budget on the inclusion of financing for the KAD building into Parliament's budget for 2016, taking into consideration possible savings in interest rates;

28. Recalls that, due to the construction of the KAD building, total payments per year will in the future be much lower than the rental expenses of comparable property;

Communication

29. Calls on the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Budgets on the evaluation of the 2014 parliamentary election campaign as well as the effectiveness of the Parliament's communication measures dedicated to the general public;

30. Strongly believes that the primary mandate of Members is legislative work; considers, therefore, that for this purpose priority should be given to communication with the public and other stakeholders by the upgrading of technical equipment and media facilities given the increased media interest, the growing importance of social media and Members' additional needs during the ordinary plenary sessions;

31. Asks the Bureau to proceed to an independent evaluation of the first European Youth Event before organising a second event;

Parliament's environmental footprint

32. Reiterates Parliament's responsibility to act in a sustainable manner; welcomes the efforts made in order to achieve a paperless environment and the ongoing valuable work realised through the EMAS approach; believes that the EMAS process needs continued budgetary support;

33. Asks for an evaluation of the results of the voluntary approach when it comes to using business class for short distance flights;

House of European History

34. Notes that the opening of the House of European History is foreseen for 2016; requests the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets in due time before the Parliament's reading in autumn 2015 an updated budget programming over the next five years for the operational and functioning expenditure foreseen for the House of European History from the opening, including the participation of the Commission; recalls that in the 2014 budget a new budget line 16 03 04 'House of European History' was created in Section III of the Union budget for the Commission's contribution to the operational costs of the House of the European History;

Staff measures

35. Stresses that the implementation of the 5 % staff reduction target, as decided in the framework of the Agreement on the 2014-2020 MFF, should continue in 2016; welcomes the confirmation not to extend the staffing reductions to staff of the political groups, which is fully in line with the Parliament's abovementioned resolutions on the 2014 and 2015 budgets;

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36. Notes that for 2016 it is proposed to remove 57 posts from the establishment plan of the Parliament's Secretariat, which should save some EUR 1,8 million, considering that some of these posts are currently vacant and that the holders of the remaining posts will retire or be redeployed in the course of the year; notes that it is proposed to remove two further posts from the Parliament's establishment plan and transferred to the Commission in connection with two interinstitutional IT projects under Commission management, and that two additional posts will therefore be created in the Commission establishment plan for 2016;

37. Approves the proposal of the Secretary-General to create 25 additional posts to reinforce DG SAFE in order to improve the effectiveness of the security systems inside and outside the Parliament's premises, the buildings' fire prevention, as well as to ensure an appropriate protection for its Members, staff and high level guests on the Parliament's premises; asks for the precise cost of these posts; considers however that the security system outside the Parliament's premises should be guaranteed by the Belgian authorities;

38. Welcomes the proposal to reinforce the secretariats of parliamentary committees in order to allow Members to receive the necessary support in dealing with scrutiny, in particular in those parliamentary committees with the highest number, currently or to come, of implementing and delegated acts; underlines that any reinforcement should be done by means of redeployment;

39. Notes that, to this end, the Secretary-General proposes the creation of 20 additional posts in order to reinforce the secretariats of the parliamentary committees concerned (ECON, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN and LIBE);

40. Calls on the Secretary-General to present to the Committee on Budgets a complete overview of the development of posts in Parliament and of how the 5 % staff reduction target has been approached so far and how it will be achieved in time and which reference number of posts in the establishment plan is being used to implement this aim;

Final considerations

41. Adopts the estimates for the financial year 2016;

42. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the estimates to the Council and the Commission.
