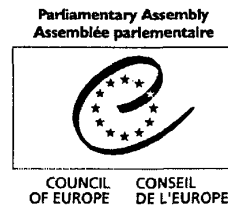


Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



For debate in the Standing Committee — see Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure

Doc. 10559
24 May 2005

Expenditure of the Assembly for the financial year 2006

Report
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development
Rapporteur: Mr Andrea Rigoni, Italy, Group of the European People's Party

I. Draft Opinion

1. The Parliamentary Assembly has always been committed to rigorous financial management within the limited funds available to it, although the range of its activities is increasing, particularly those related to assistance programmes for national parliaments and the observation of elections in several member states. Following the accession of new member states, the workload has grown significantly, owing to an increase in the number of representatives and substitutes, of reports dealing with a wider range of topics and of activities initiated by parliamentarians and political groups, placing great pressure on the Assembly's human resources.

2. The Assembly's main activities are:

- i. holding a four-part plenary session;
- ii. meetings of the Bureau and Standing Committee held between part-sessions of the Assembly ;
- iii. meetings in Strasbourg or Paris, lasting one or more days outside the four part-sessions, of each of the ten general committees, their sub-committees, ad hoc committees of the Assembly or the Bureau and specialised working groups;
- iv. committee and sub-committee meetings held elsewhere than in Strasbourg or Paris;
- v. parliamentary conferences, colloquies, seminars and hearings;
- vi. activities under the Assembly's interparliamentary co-operation programme;
- vii. observation of elections;

viii. the work of the political groups.

3. The Assembly is convinced that the Committee of Ministers will accept its proposals for 2006, which it has deliberately limited to those for 2005. It is conscious of the challenges facing the Council of Europe, particularly as regards the implementation of the Action Plan agreed by the Heads of State and Government at their Third Summit on 16 and 17 May 2005 in Warsaw, and does not wish to place increased pressure on the Organisation's budget, even though the ideal level of human and financial resources needed to ensure the smooth functioning of the Assembly has not yet been attained.

4. The Assembly took note of the request by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe that the Assembly's budget for 2006 provide for 2 % efficiency savings by comparison with the 2005 budget it being understood that efficiency savings do not aim at a reduction in the activity of the Assembly. In principle, it considers that, having regard to its very limited budget, it can accept no effective reduction in its appropriations. Nevertheless, the Secretary General of the Assembly has already undertaken to do everything possible to make savings but without harming the quality and effectiveness of its work. The Assembly wishes to be informed of the purposes for which these savings could be used.

5. In this context, several aspects of the Assembly's functioning are being reviewed:

- i. methods of preparation and distribution of official reports of Assembly debates;
- ii. methods of document distribution to the Assembly's members and to parliamentary delegations;
- iii. a possible reduction in the number of copies of documents printed during the Assembly's part-sessions;
- iv. better co-ordination of committee meetings, for example by grouping and organising them more effectively. This might also help to produce savings for national parliaments.

Furthermore, the suppression of the fifth day (Friday) of part-sessions of the Assembly might also be considered.

6. Implementation of some of these measures requires prior analysis of their impact on the quality of the documents and services provided for members of the Assembly. Others require the committees' full and unreserved co-operation. These questions are now being studied and no exact figures can be given at present for the savings which may be generated.

7. The Assembly is convinced that any measure other than those referred to above would lead not to efficiency savings but to a reduction in its activities or would require more radical changes in its *modus operandi*, calling for political decisions (e.g. languages policy). It considers such measures unacceptable.

8. Finally, the Assembly recalls its position of principle that any efficiency savings should be used to reinforce and finance its own activities and particularly to develop its co-operation and assistance programmes which will, in 2006, be focusing on the Parliaments of the South Caucasus, Ukraine and Moldova and the Palestinian Legislative Council. An additional € 250 000 in 2006 would be needed to ensure the implementation of these programmes. The Assembly hopes that efficiency savings will allow their financing. For this reason, it is not asking for extra funding for development of these programmes.

9. For all these reasons, the Assembly did not wish, at this juncture, to change the breakdown of its appropriations from 2005 to 2006.

10. The Assembly needs to continue to devote the appropriate resources to develop its relations and co-operation with other parliamentary bodies, particularly the European Parliament and the national parliaments, which should be its chief partners. In the current phase of the European project, doing this is in the Council of Europe's interest.

11. As the Council of Europe's parliamentary body and political forum, the Assembly must bring its facilities into line with modern communication requirements. It accordingly asks the Committee of Ministers to include in the budget for 2006 the investment priorities which were not included in the 2005 budget. This applies to the installation of continuously functioning TV cameras, replacement of the vote display panels with two large-format video-walls and installation of a new and reliable voting system, since the present one is obsolete and increasingly expensive to maintain. The Assembly should also be able to develop its communication policy by making full use of the new media technologies. This would make its activities, public documents and information material more accessible to the public, governments, parliaments and other institutions.

12. The Assembly appreciates the Committee of Ministers' decision, in the last two years, to make an adjustment in the grants to its 5 political groups. It hopes that it will do the same in 2006.

13. The Assembly considers that the time has come to give it budgetary powers corresponding to its status as the Council of Europe's parliamentary and political body. It considers its present subordinate position incompatible with the principles of a genuine parliamentary democracy.

14. The Assembly requests that it be given at least co-decision-making power to determine its operating budget, in accordance with its Recommendations 1155 (1995) and 1344 (1997). In particular, the Assembly, basing itself on Article 41.d of the Council of Europe's Statute related to Amendments, which states that "amendments to Articles 23 to 35 (Assembly), 38 and 39 (Finance) which have been approved by the Committee and by the Assembly shall come into force on the date of the certificate of the Secretary General, transmitted to the governments of members, certifying that they have been so approved", suggests that the Committee of Ministers add to Article 38 of the Statute, after paragraph c, a new paragraph, worded as follows:

"The Assembly shall determine the amount of its expenditure, the growth rate being agreed between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly."

15. In this connection, the Assembly points out that the simplified procedure provided for in Article 41.d was already used to supplement this article in 1951 and that the "heavy" procedure for amendment of the Statute is not required.

Appended to this Opinion are:

- i. a table of the requests for 2006 compared with the appropriations in 2005, presented according to the results-based budgeting method which has led the Secretariat of the Assembly to divide the budget into two activity sectors:
 - a. Plenary sessions
 - b. Functioning of the various Assembly bodies

Expenditure in each sector is broken down into the same categories;
- ii. a brief explanation of the various items of expenditure;
- iii. a table setting out the Assembly's work programme according to the results-based budgeting method.

0000392 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote Autres dépenses non spécialement prévues au présent titre.....	20 400	20 400
TOTAL HEAD 0310		
TOTAL DU CHAPITRE 0310.....	4 395 800	4 395 800

HEAD 0311 – Functioning of the Assembly's various bodies CHAPITRE 0311 – Fonctionnement des diverses instances de l'Assemblée		
<u>Dépenses de personnel/Staff expenditure</u>		
Sub-heads/Articles		
0000001 - Remuneration of staff recruited on established posts Rémunération du personnel recruté sur le cadre des emplois permanents	6 350 400	6 350 400
0000003 - Remuneration and accessory charges of temporary staff Rémunération et charges accessoires du personnel temporaire	302 100	302 100
0000005 - Salary, allowances and social charges of the Secretary General of the Assembly / Rémunération, indemnités et charges sociales du Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée	128 600	128 600
0000013 - Secondment of national civil servants to the Assembly Fonctionnaires nationaux mis à disposition de l'Assemblée	61 000	61 000
0000016 - Recruitment, arrival and departure expenses – Home leave Frais de recrutement à l'arrivée et au départ – congé dans le pays d'origine	62 200	62 200
<u>Supplies, services and other operational expenditure</u> <u>Dépenses de matériel et autres dépenses de fonctionnement</u>		
Sub-heads/Articles		
0000080 - Official journeys Frais de missions.....	408 000	408 000
0000095 - Representational expenditure, other official expenditure and travelling expenses of members of the Assembly / Dépenses de représentation, frais de fonction et de déplacement des Membres de l'Assemblée.....	173 400	173 400
0000115 - Interpretation Interprétation.....	1 050 000	1 050 000
0000116 - Translation Traduction.....	119 300	119 300
0000124 - Publishing and printing Publications et impressions.....	132 400	132 400
0000125 – Outsourced production of documents Production externalisée de documents	15 300	15 300
0000129 - Consultation of experts Consultation d'experts.....	70 000	70 000
0000162 - Expenditure pertaining to the Private Office of the President of the Assembly / Dépenses du Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée.....	76 500	76 500
0000163 - Official expenses of the President of the Assembly Frais de fonction du Président de l'Assemblée.....	104 000	104 000
0000166 - Expenses for inviting guests of the Parliamentary Assembly Dépenses d'accueil des invités de l'Assemblée parlementaire.....	p.m.	p.m.
0000171 - Organisation of ad hoc conferences Organisation de conférences ad hoc.....	147 400	147 400

0000204 - Modernisation of the Assembly's equipment Modernisation de l'équipement de l'Assemblée.....	p.m.	p.m.
0000205 - European prizes Prix européens.....	86 700	86 700
0000206 - Operating and maintenance costs of the electronic voting system Coûts de maintenance et d'exploitation du vote électronique.....	p.m.	p.m.
0000250 - Co-operation and monitoring programme Programme de coopération et du suivi des engagements	690 900	690 900
0000370 - Allocation to Assembly's political groups Dotation des groupes politiques de l'Assemblée	670 700	670 700
0000392 - Other expenditure not specifically provided for in this vote Autres dépenses non spécialement prévues au présent titre.....	45 900	45 900
TOTAL HEAD 0303 TOTAL DU CHAPITRE 0303	10 694 800	10 694 800
TOTAL VOTE III TOTAL DU TITRE III	15 090 600	15 090 600

Appendix II

VOTE III – EXPENDITURE OF THE ASSEMBLY

HEADS 0310 & 0311 – STAFF

This appropriation covers the basic salaries, allowances (non-recurring and periodic) and social coverage of the permanent staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly (87 posts) as well as temporary staff. Contrary to the practice adopted in previous years, expenditure on staff has been broken down according to the Assembly's two activity sectors, namely organisation of the plenary sessions and the functioning of the various Assembly bodies.

The Assembly currently has ten committees: nine of them have 83 members (with 83 alternates), and the remaining one has 51 members (with 51 alternates). The Secretariat comprises 87 posts, broken down as follows:

1 A7	2 B6	1 C4
2 A6	5 B5	
11 A5	16 B4	
10 A4	12 B3	
19 A2/A3	8 B2	

Experience in the last few years has shown that, to be fully operational, each of the nine 83-member committees needs four A-grade staff members (one A5 Head of Secretariat, one A4 Secretary and two A2/A3 co-secretaries), one B4 administrative assistant and one B2/B3. The 51-member committee needs two A-grade staff members (one A4 Secretary and one A2/A3 co-secretary), one B4 administrative assistant and one B2/B3.

However, the current establishment table does not allow the Secretary General of the Assembly to redeploy the Assembly's permanent staff so as to achieve the desired structure. In fact, several committees have encountered difficulties in coping with the increased tasks and responsibilities resulting from their enlarged membership.

At present, the Secretariat of the Assembly is organised so that the ten Assembly committees have 49 staff members (29 A-grade and 20 B-grade) working for them, with the remaining 38 working for the Bureau of the Assembly, the Private Office of the President of the Assembly, the Table Office and the interparliamentary co-operation, finance and administration, communication, information technology and research units. According to the structure set out above, the ten parliamentary committees should have 58 staff members (38 A-grade and 20 B-grade) available to them. There is therefore a shortfall of nine A-grade staff members at the level of committees.

The purpose of appropriations under the item "staff expenditure" in heads 0310 and 0311 can be described, for each sub-head, as follows:

Sub-head 0000001:	remuneration of permanent staff (basic salary, allowances and social charges);
Sub-head 0000003:	remuneration of temporary staff (basic salary, travel expenses, allowances for travelling time, social charges) engaged for Assembly sessions (around 150 persons for a global cost of € 200.000, per session), meetings of Assembly bodies, ad hoc conferences and colloquies;
Sub-head 0000005:	remuneration of the Secretary General of the Assembly (basic salary, allowances and social charges);

- Sub-head 0000007: overtime payments to permanent staff of the Council of Europe entitled to such payment for work during the sessions of the Assembly (e.g. payments to drivers, messengers etc.);
- Sub-head 0000013: allowances and travel expenses paid to civil servants from national parliaments who are on secondment to the Assembly;
- Sub-head 0000016: recruitment costs for staff members of the Assembly on arrival and departure, expenses in respect of paid home leave.

HEADS 0310 & 0311 – SUPPLIES, SERVICES AND OTHER OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

Since 1975, following a decision by the Committee of Ministers, the appropriations under these Heads should be voted in the form of a single appropriation, although it would continue to be divided into sub-heads. If the Assembly wished to change the relative amounts in the package at a later date, either because of an overall reduction or for any other reason dictated by the implementation of the budget, such a change will be effected by the Secretary General at the Assembly's request and in accordance with Article 31 of the Financial Regulations. Since 2005 and the adoption for the entire Organisation of a results-based budget, which do not change the above-mentioned decision, all operational expenditure of the Assembly, i.e. co-operation and monitoring programmes, publications, interpretation, translation, official journeys, experts, conferences, European prizes, etc, has been set out under Heads 0310 and 0311, corresponding to the new sector-based presentation of the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. The first activity sector comprises expenditure related to the four Assembly part-sessions while the second covers the operational expenditure of the various Assembly bodies. They include, by sub-head, the following expenditure:

- Sub-head 0000080: official travel (missions) by the staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly required to attend meetings of the Assembly (bodies) and other organisations;
- Sub-head 0000095: hospitality expenses incurred during visits by important personalities visiting the Assembly, travel expenses and subsistence allowances of members of the Assembly representing it at meetings of certain Council of Europe bodies (other than sessions of the Assembly and meetings of the Assembly committees), accident insurance premiums for official travelling;
- Sub-head 0000115: interpretation costs from and into official and working languages of the Assembly (interpretation in the five official languages - French, English, German, Italian and Russian - for each plenary session and for the plenary meetings of committees, interpretation in two languages for the meetings of sub-committees). The cost of one week session is approximately € 230 000;
- Sub-head 0000116: translation costs into official and working languages as well as non-official languages. The appropriations cover the translation of 24,000 pages at € 20.90 per page;
- Sub-head 0000124: printing (23 000 000 pages per year) and mailing expenses;
- Sub-head 0000125: cost of production of documents outside the Council of Europe;
- Sub-head 0000129: fees, travel and subsistence expenses for experts asked to carry out technical work or called in for consultation by the Assembly bodies;

- Sub-head 0000162: official journeys by Private Office staff or/and staff travelling at the President's request, fees, travel and subsistence expenses of experts called by the President;
- Sub-head 0000163: representational, travel and subsistence expenses incurred by the President in the exercise of his functions;
- Sub-head 0000166: expenditure arising from the Assembly's external relations (reception of guests, travel and subsistence expenses of invited delegations of non member states);
- Sub-head 0000171: expenditure arising from for the organisation of conferences, symposia or seminars (travel and subsistence expenses of participants, publishing, hospitality);
- Sub-head 0000204: modernisation of the Assembly's equipment;
- Sub-head 0000205: European Prizes (Europe Prize - € 7 600, Council of Europe Museum Prize - € 5 000 -, "European Prize for Television"-category "Young Europe" - € 6 000 -, expenditure incurred in connection with presentation of prizes, annual meeting of the Selection Committee of the Museum Prize);
- Sub-head 0000206: operating and maintenance costs of the electronic voting system;
- Sub-head 0000250: expenditure relating to the observation of elections and within the framework of the Assembly monitoring procedure, information seminars for parliamentarians and training for parliamentary staff, official journeys by staff, legislative, statutory and technical assistance to national parliaments ;
- Sub-head 0000392: expenditure in connection with the financial contribution of the Assembly to the activities of International, Interparliamentary, Intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, hire of cars, purchase of medals, flags and representation gifts, sundry expenditure.

As mentioned above, the appropriations provided for in sub-head 0000250 are intended to cover expenditure under the Assembly's co-operation and monitoring programme (including missions to observe elections in member states).

For 2006, a number of planned activities, besides those of the committees and sub-committees, may already be mentioned at this stage:

The most important event is without doubt the Conference of Speakers of European Parliamentary Assemblies, to be held at the end of May 2006 in Tallinn (Estonia).

Furthermore, in response to Resolution 1420 (2005) on prospects for peace in the Middle East, the Bureau of the Assembly, meeting on 18 March 2005, decided to organise a tripartite Forum bringing together an equal number of representatives of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council, under the auspices of its Sub-Committee on the Middle East.

Finally, a parliamentary co-operation programme aimed at officials of the Parliaments of the South Caucasus countries and Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Moldova, as well as the National Palestinian Council is being drawn up. The aim of the programme is to supply information through seminars on the Council of Europe activities in the field of human rights, social affairs, cultural co-operation and challenges to society. For 2006, the programme foresees a thematic seminar by groups of countries.

It is also planned to hold a conference jointly with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on sustainable development in the Black Sea region.

To conclude, it should also be noted that the Council of Europe Secretary General has negotiated a framework programme of co-operation with the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR). In this context a new contract is being finalised to implement a programme to support the parliamentary institutions of Serbia and Montenegro. This programme will be financed up to 1.5 million euros by the European Agency for Reconstruction and a 10% contribution by the Council of Europe.

In its Opinion No. 249 (2004), the Assembly identified several investment priorities to be included in the future investment planning of the Council of Europe:

- 1) Access for persons with disabilities to the Assembly Chamber;
- 2) Separate access to the public gallery from outside the building;
- 3) Installation of a permanent system of television cameras controlled and managed by technicians from a distance.

The Assembly notes that its first priority has been duly taken into account in the 2005-2009 investment plan and that funds have been set aside in the 2005 budget for the improvements needed to make the Assembly Chamber and public areas accessible to persons with disabilities. This work also includes renovation of the parliamentarians' foyer. Where the second priority is concerned, the architecture of the Palais de l'Europe unfortunately does not allow separate direct access to the public gallery of the Assembly Chamber from outside the building. However, the Assembly notes that the 2005 budget includes a provision for complete renovation of the area reserved for the public on the ground floor.

On the other hand, returning to its third priority, it would like particular attention to be focused on the installation of a permanent system of television cameras controlled and managed by technicians from the booth located on the upper right-hand side of the Assembly Chamber. This new system would replace the current manual system which requires several camera operators to be present in the Assembly Chamber itself which obstructs the view of some members, preventing them from seeing the President's Table. It would also be advisable to provide for the replacement of the vote display boards located on either side of the rostrum, facing the Chamber, with two large screens of the "videowall" type which could be used to show the speaker or any high-profile guests and the results of votes. This system could also be used for powerpoint presentations or as a video-conferencing aid. Both these proposals would, of course, benefit the Organisation as a whole as they would improve television coverage of all the events taking place in the Assembly Chamber and increase the possibilities for using that area. This investment should include complete refurbishment of the President's Table and the rostrum, which are old-fashioned and no longer suited to the Assembly's needs. The need for a new and reliable voting system should also be borne in mind, since the present one is obsolete and increasingly expensive to maintain. The total investment would amount to approximately 900 000 €.

HEAD 0311 – ALLOCATION TO THE ASSEMBLY'S POLITICAL GROUPS

Sub-head 0000370 – Allocation to the Assembly's political groups

The allocation to the political groups is calculated on the basis of a lump sum for secretarial assistance to each of the existing groups and an additional per capita allocation according to membership. The appropriation for 2005 was 670 700 €.

For 2006, the appropriation under this head should be maintained at the same level as in 2005 in real terms.

Appendix III

Title Plenary Sessions			
Intervention Logic	Performance Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Activity Area Objective The Assembly is able to fulfill its statutory tasks			
Expected Result 1 The order of business for each part-session is prepared, docs to discuss are sent to MPs, the tabling of deadlines for amendments is fixed	The part-session order of business as well as the reports are sent out two weeks before the session. For each debate, the date and the time for the tabling of amendments are specified	Dispatch slip Part-session calendar Feedback from MPs	Administrative support of CoE central services. Administrative support from secretaries of national delegations and political groups
Expected Result 2 A time table is respected Amendments and adopted texts are quickly published, a majority of registered speakers may speak during a debate	Amendments are published in the two official languages within 4 hours after being deposited; adopted texts are published in the two official languages within the 4 hours after their adoption. A minimum of 50% of registered speakers have the floor	Part-session calendar Availability of texts and amendments in the Distribution room for each debate Reports of debates List of speakers Feedback from MPs	Administrative support of CoE central services. Administrative support from secretaries of national delegations and political groups
Expected Result 3 Adopted texts are transmitted to the Organs concerned	Proposals for the follow-up of adopted texts are ready and submitted to the Bureau of the Assembly for its meeting on the last day of the part-session	Minutes of the Bureau Transmission of letters to the Organs concerned	

Title Functioning of the Assembly's various bodies			
Intervention Logic	Performance Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Activity Area Objective The smooth functioning of the Assembly's various bodies is ensure.			
Expected Result 1 Committee meetings, seminars and conferences are efficiently organised	Meeting agendas, relevant documents and reports are ready for distribution on time	Minutes of committee meetings Proceedings of seminars and conferences	Ongoing political support from members of relevant committees
Expected Result 2 Efficient and effective assistance to the President of the Assembly is provided	Level of satisfaction of the President of the Assembly	Feedback from the President of the Assembly	
Expected Result 3 Cooperation with national parliaments is further developed	Level of satisfaction of beneficiary national parliaments Quality of the cooperation offered	Annual report prepared by the Secretariat and submitted for endorsement to the Bureau of the Assembly	Satisfaction of basic political standards necessary for establishing cooperation
Expected Result 4 Financial resources to the Assembly's five political groups are provided	Timely provision of financial resources	Annual report by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development on the use of the appropriations by the Assembly's five political groups	Annual financial statements are submitted by the Assembly's five political groups
Expected Result 5 The Assembly's external profile is raised	Media coverage of the Assembly's activities Number of visitors to the Assembly's website	International and European press and news media The Assembly's website	

II. Explanatory Memorandum by Mr Rigoni, Rapporteur

1. The purpose of this report is to analyse Vote III of the Council of Europe's ordinary budget, in particular the appropriations allocated to the Assembly to cover staff expenditure, the costs associated with the functioning of political groups, supplies, services and other operational outlay, as well as the financing of the Organisation's interparliamentary co-operation programme. This choice of topics means that the common services of the Council of Europe, which form an integral part of the Assembly's operations, are not discussed. For example, Vote III does not cover telephone bills, office supplies and equipment, and other consumables, which are items of expenditure common to all the Organisation's departments.

2. The Rapporteur has therefore concentrated on proposals for the Assembly's appropriations for the year 2006, in full compliance with existing budgetary procedures. As in previous years, the Assembly is leaving it to the Directorate of Finance to assess, in due course, the adjustments to its appropriations that are being or will be made for 2005 as a result of changes in salary scales, their implications for 2006 as well as the provision that needs to be made for salary adjustment in 2006. Similarly, it is for the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to adjust the other appropriations in due course to take account of inflation.

3. The Rapporteur wishes to reiterate the Assembly's major tasks, which shape its programme of activities:

- holding a four-part plenary session;
- meetings of the Bureau and the Standing Committee between sessions;
- meetings in Strasbourg or Paris, lasting one or more days outside the four part-sessions, of each of the ten general committees, their sub-committees, ad hoc committees of the Assembly or the Bureau and the specialised working groups;
- meetings of committees and sub-committees held elsewhere than Strasbourg or Paris;
- parliamentary conferences, colloquies, seminars and hearings;
- activities under the Assembly's interparliamentary co-operation programme;
- the work of the political groups.

4. The Rapporteur then focused more specifically on the Assembly's investment priorities for the years ahead. He took note of the responses concerning the priorities identified in Opinion No.249 (2004).

The first investment concerned work to make the Assembly Chamber accessible to persons with disabilities. On this point, the Rapporteur is pleased to note that the Organisation's investment plan for the period 2005-2009 provides for improvements to make the Assembly Chamber and the public areas accessible to persons with disabilities. The second priority was to create a separate access to the Assembly's public gallery, to make it directly accessible from outside the building. Unfortunately, the architecture of the Palais de l'Europe, and in particular the fact that the Assembly Chamber is situated in the centre of the building, makes it impossible to provide direct access to the visitors' gallery from outside, a feature which most parliaments have. However, work is planned to restrict access for groups of visitors to non-public areas of the building and to create areas open to the public on the ground floor and the first and second floors. This is not the solution that the Assembly was hoping for, but the result of a compromise between the demands of free public access, security considerations relating to the areas reserved for civil servants and parliamentarians, and architectural constraints. The third priority concerns the installation of a permanent system of television cameras controlled and managed by technicians from the booth located on the upper right-hand side of the Assembly Chamber. This new system should replace the existing manual system which requires several camera operators to be present in the Assembly Chamber itself. This obstructs the view of some members, preventing them from seeing the President's Table.

5. This third proposal would of course benefit the Organisation as a whole in that it would improve television coverage of all events taking place in the Assembly Chamber. This investment should also include complete refurbishment of the President's Table and the rostrum, which are old-fashioned and no longer suited to the Assembly's needs, and the installation of a new and reliable voting system, since the present one is obsolete and increasingly expensive to maintain. On the other hand, the Rapporteur is convinced of the need to extend the scope of the third priority (television cameras) to include the replacement of the current vote display boards, situated on either side of the rostrum, with two large "videowall" screens, of the kind found in airports and industrial control rooms. This highly effective system can be used to show speakers or high-profile guests, to display the results of votes, and also for powerpoint presentations and as a video-conferencing aid. An installation of this kind would undoubtedly improve television coverage of all the events taking place in the Assembly Chamber and increase the possibilities for using that area.

6. Having examined the Assembly's *modus operandi* and current structure, the Rapporteur wishes to insist on its general strategy of having 58 staff members to service its ten parliamentary committees, since the present structure of committee secretariats may well prove inadequate to maintain the quality of work and the ability, essential in a political body, to respond efficiently and rapidly to unforeseen events. Internal restructuring has added to the workload of the Assembly's committees, which are currently served by only 49 staff members. Since the Council of Europe's financial resources are limited, the Rapporteur believes that the structure the Assembly wants should be attained over a reasonable period, thus ensuring that no excessive financial burden is imposed on member states.

7. The Rapporteur has therefore been confronted with two conflicting factors, which have to be carefully considered when formulating budgetary proposals. On the one hand, aware of the current budgetary difficulties and future challenges, the Rapporteur has to limit the Assembly's budgetary requests to the minimum. On the other, he considers that the budgetary difficulties, though real and tangible, should not be allowed to jeopardise the overall functioning of the Organisation's parliamentary organ, which acts in the interests of all the member states, especially in fostering parliamentary democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights. Moreover, adjusting the administrative structure of the Secretariat of the Assembly is indeed a priority for the member states, which are the ultimate beneficiaries of its activities.

8. Having considered all these elements, including the Council of Europe Secretary General's request for 2% efficiency savings, the Rapporteur has decided to put forward proposals that respect strict budgetary neutrality, despite the growing demands arising from the Organisation's enlargement and the increase in the Assembly's responsibilities (in terms of both quality and quantity), in view of the Organisation's limited financial resources and the priorities set by the Third Summit. Indeed, looking at the structure of the Assembly's expenditure, it is clear that items on which no savings can be made actually absorb most of its appropriations. Its total appropriations of 15 090 600 € are allocated as follows:

Permanent and temporary staff:	9 145 600 €
Interpretation:	1 950 000 €
Translation:	500 000 €
Grants to political groups:	670 000 €
Printing of documents:	743 000 €

Sub-total	13 008 600 €
Activities:	2 082 000 €

General total:	15 090 600 €

A 2% saving on the Assembly's total appropriations would come to 302 000 €, which, if applied solely to appropriations for activities (2 082 000 €), would involve a 14.5% cut in those appropriations.

9. For the year 2006, the Assembly's financial proposals will therefore be similar to those for 2005 and will merely take into account the increases resulting from the inflation rate which is applied.

10. Before concluding, the Rapporteur wishes to draw the committee members' attention to one further point, concerning the table appearing in Appendix III to this draft Opinion. This presents the Assembly's budget in accordance with the results-based budgeting method, which will – in his opinion – bring far too much rigidity into the Assembly's work. Nevertheless, to comply with the Secretary General's request, and forestall inconsistencies in the general presentation of the Council of Europe's overall budget, to which the new method has been applied, it was decided that the Assembly's budget would follow the same criteria.

11. In order to understand better how this method affects the Assembly's budget, it is important to outline the main features of this new process:

- (a) programmes are formulated and resources justified in terms of predefined objectives, expected results, outputs, inputs and performance indicators, which constitute a "logical framework";
- (b) expected results justify resource requirements, which are derived from, and linked to, outputs required to achieve these results; and
- (c) predefined performance indicators are used to measure actual performance in achieving results.

12. The Assembly's budget is now divided into two activity sectors. The first corresponds to (i) the organisation and functioning of plenary sessions, while the second concerns (ii) the functioning of the various Assembly bodies. Each of these sectors is covered by a budget head (Heads 0310 and 0311, each of which includes staff and operational expenditure). For each activity sector, an objective has been identified and represents what it is proposed to achieve, and for each objective a number of expected results have been defined, as well as performance indicators (to assess and measure the effects of activities), sources of verification and, lastly, any eventualities which may prevent the expected results from being achieved.

13. The Rapporteur believes that the sole purpose of the new presentation is to give the Assembly Secretariat objectives designed to ensure that the Assembly functions smoothly, both at plenary sessions and in implementing its work programme, and that assessing the Secretariat's efficiency is a matter for Bureau, which already supervises the Assembly's activities. The new method should certainly not be used to assess the work of the Assembly or its bodies *per se*, as the Secretary General, Terry Davis, quite rightly pointed out at his meeting with the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development on 28 February 2005. The Assembly has no way of knowing, a year in advance, what types of programme it may implement, or what political action it may take, in response to specific political developments, or foreseeing problems to which it may have to react.

14. Finally, the Rapporteur considers that the Assembly's contributions have significantly helped the Committee of Ministers to identify new priorities, and suggests that it be given genuine co-decision-making powers to determine its operational appropriations.

Reporting committee: Committee on Economic Affairs and Development.

Reference to committee: Standing mandate

Draft Opinion adopted by the Committee on 23 May 2005

Members of the committee: Mr Evgeni **Kirilov** (Chairperson), Mrs Antigoni Pericleous Papadopoulos (Vice-Chairperson), Mr Márton **Braun** (Vice-Chairperson), Mr Konstantinos **Vrettos** (Vice-Chairperson), MM. Ruhi **Açikgöz**, Ulrich Adam, Hans Ager, Miguel Anacoreta Correia, Abdülkadir **Ateş**, Radu-Mircea Berceanu, Akhmed Bilalov (alternate: Mr Nikolay **Tulaev**), Jaime Blanco, Patrick **Breen**, Milos Budin, Erol Aslan **Cebeci**, Mrs Ingrida Circene, MM. Valeriu Cosarciuc, Ignacio Cosidó, Giovanni Crema, Øystein Djupedal, Ioannis Dragassakis, Iván Farkas (alternate: Mrs Edita **Angyalová**), Relu Fenechiu, Mrs Siv **Fridleifsdóttir**, Mr Carles Gasóliba, Ms Jane Griffiths, MM. Francis Grignon, Alfred Gusenbauer, Norbert **Hauptert**, Anders G. Högmark (alternate: Mr Göran **Lindblad**), Klaus Werner **Jonas**, Ms Verica Kalanović, MM. Karen Karapetyan, Orest **Klympush**, Anatoliy **Korobeynikov**, Rudolf Kraus, Zoran Krstevski, Jean-Marie **Le Guen**, Harald Leibracht, Rune Lund (alternate: Mr Jens Hald **Madsen**), Gadzhya Makhachev (alternate: Mrs Liudmila **Pirozhnikova**), Jean-Pierre Masseret (alternate: Mr Jean-François **Le Grand**), Miloš **Melčák**, Mrs Ljiljana Milićević, MM. Neven **Mimica**, Conny **Öhman**, Mart Opmann, Mrs Clara Pintat Rossell, MM. Bogdan **Podgórski**, Jakob **Presečnik**, Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Luigi Ramponi, Maurizio Rattini, Maximilian **Reimann**, Dario **Rivolta**, Lord Russell-Johnston (alternate: Baroness Gloria **Hooper**), MM. Volodymyr Rybak, Kimmo **Sasi**, Bernard Schreiner (alternate: Mr Michel **Hunault**), Samad Seyidov (alternate: Mr Aydin **Mirzazada**), Leonid Slutsky, Ms Geraldine Smith, Mrs Aynur Sofiyeva, MM. Christophe Spiliotis-Saquet, Dimitar **Stefanov**, Qazim Tepshi, Frans Timmermans, Dragan Todorović, Mrs Ágnes Vadai, Mr Luc **Van den Brande**, Mrs Jelleke **Veenendaal**, Mrs Birutė **Vėsaitė**, MM. Oldřich Vojtíš, Varujan Vosganian (alternate: Mr Mircea **Mereuță**), Robert **Walter**, Andrzej **Wielowieyski**, Marek Wikiński, Paul **Wille**, Mrs Rosmarie Zapfl-Helbling (alternate: Mr Johannes **Randegger**), Mr Kostyantyn Zhevago

NB : The names of the members who took part in the meeting are printed in **bold**

Head of Secretariat: Mr Torbiörn

Secretaries to the committee: Ms Ramanauskaite, Mr De Buyer

