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3 October 2006

## The budget of the Council of Europe

Motion for a recommendation  
presented by Mr Schmied and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. For a number of years now the Council of Europe has been encountering significant difficulties in adopting a budget allowing preservation of its activities and the proper functioning of its departments. As a result of the member states' low budgetary contributions and the principle of zero growth in real terms applied to the Council of Europe budget in recent years the budget is no longer in line with the Organisation's needs. The situation has now reached the point where the activity and structures of the Organisation could even be endangered.
2. This budgetary situation appears inconsistent with the Organisation's development: the emergence of new activities, enlargement to new member states and so on. Nor does it reflect the political commitment which the member states have asserted vis-à-vis the Council of Europe, as recently reiterated at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005.
3. The Assembly is concerned about these developments and considers that the time has come for a fundamental debate aimed at rethinking the budgetary policy, methods and procedures of the Council of Europe, which still adhere to old concepts no longer suited to the present situation.
4. The Assembly firstly wants its role in the budgetary procedure to be changed so that, like any parliamentary institution, it is entitled to a say concerning the amount of the Organisation's budget, its growth rate and its apportionment as regards both contributions and expenditure. Given that the statute of the Council of Europe recognises two statutory organs, it is unacceptable that the Assembly should be sidelined in budgetary decision concerning the Organisation. It must be given a budgetary role without delay, under conditions to be defined.
5. In this connection, it can be pointed out that the Assembly already made a number of proposals in its Recommendation 1728 ((2005) on the budgetary powers of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, to which the Committee of Ministers has not yet replied.
6. Pending examination of the proposals already made and consultations with the Committee of Ministers in due time, the Assembly accordingly wishes to review the budgetary situation and procedures with a view to issuing other proposals geared to improving the current situation from both a political and a strictly budgetary standpoint.
7. The Assembly consequently recommends to the Committee of Ministers inter alia that:
  - the Assembly be involved in budgetary decisions, particularly those affecting it directly, provision be made, in any case, for the Assembly to enjoy budgetary autonomy, enabling it to decide its own budget within jointly agreed limits;

- two-year or multi-annual budgets be adopted to simplify the budgetary procedure, facilitate management and improve the programming of activities;
- a change be made to the criteria used in apportioning the budget among the member states, in particular the five major contributors, so as to reflect their present populations;
- the weighting of population and GDP be modified, so the latter counts for more in the calculation of member states' contributions;
- the observer states, who also benefit from the Organisation's work, be asked to make a budgetary contribution, to be determined in the light of their status;
- agreement be reached with member states' governments on setting a national contribution, based on payment of a defined percentage of national tax, with a view to guaranteeing budgetary stability;
- greater use be made of the partial agreements system, so that contributions are paid by the member states directly concerned;
- minimum contributions payable by member states be set so as to cover certain obligatory expenditure items, to be determined (the administrative cost of a judge of the Court, etc.);
- a separate budget be adopted for the European Court of Human Rights, financed with ad hoc - budgetary contributions;
- arrangements be made for member states' authorities to bear the cost of their national experts' participation in meetings of the various intergovernmental committees;
- a share, to be defined, of the profits of the Council of Europe Development Bank (88.5 million euros in 2005) be transferred to the Organisation's budget;
- provision be made for certain exceptional expenditure items of limited duration to be financed with loans extended to the Council of Europe by the Development Bank at advantageous interest rates.

*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> SOC: Socialist Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democratic Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left  
NR: not registered in a group