

35.

APPROPRIATIONS ALLOCATED TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
IN THE INFORMATION SECTOR  
Written Question No.239 by Mrs. Girard-Montet  
(CM(81)153)

Decision

The Deputies adopted the following reply to Written Question No. 239:

"Paragraph (a)

1973 was the year that preceded two relevant developments, one negative and affecting the Council of Europe budget as a whole, and the other positive and relating directly to information activities.

First, the 1974 budget was the first of all subsequent budgets up to the present day (and for the foreseeable future) that have had to reflect the economic climate following the 1973 oil crisis. Since 1974 the economic situation has made it impossible for the member governments to countenance the quasi-automatic, albeit modest, increases in real terms that had characterised the Organisation's budget totals up to 1973.

Secondly, since autumn 1974, the Committee of Ministers has been devoting considerably more attention than previously to the question of information policy and has taken a series of decisions designed to strengthen the information impact of the Council of Europe. In this connection, the Committee of Ministers recalls the reply it adopted in January 1976 (communicated to the Assembly in the Addendum to Doc. 3707) to paragraph 9A(ii) of Assembly Recommendation 767(1975) on the information policy of the Council of Europe:

'The Committee of Ministers has already taken steps to improve the means available to the Directorate of Press and Information to carry out its functions. It made a considerable increase in the 1975 budgetary appropriation to that Directorate. In 1976, its appropriation was again increased, although to a more modest extent. The Committee will continue to examine in a positive spirit the needs of the Directorate when considering the Budget in the years ahead.'

While this renewed concentration on information policy was not itself reflected in the budget until 1975, the 1974 budget contained a substantial appropriation (FF 250,000) under Head V to cover exceptional information expenditure that arose in particular in connection with the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Council of Europe.

The Honorable Member has requested budget comparisons over the past five budgets. These are presented below, and it can be seen from them that, despite the budgetary constraints referred to above, the Committee of Ministers has continued to build on the increase in the resources made available for the information sector since 1974.

Paragraph (b)

The figures for the ordinary general budget as a whole and for Head V of the budget are as follows:

	<u>Budget total</u> FF	<u>Head V</u> FF
1977 :	139,446,700 (1)	1,899,000
1981 :	236,212,800	3,427,000
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Increase :	96,766,100 (= 69%)	1,528,000 (= 80%)

The percentage increases break down as follows:

	<u>Budget total</u>	<u>Head V</u>
Inflation, incremental increases, etc. :	61%	43%
Increase in real terms:	<u>8%</u>	<u>37%</u> (2)
	69%	80%

Paragraph (c)

Sub-head 28 appropriation in 1977:	1,208,000 FF
Sub-head 28 appropriation in 1981:	2,114,000 FF
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Increase:	906,000 FF ( +75%) (2)

Paragraph (d)

The figure of FF 14,621,000 quoted in paragraph 1 of the Committee of Ministers' reply to Assembly Opinions No. 100 and 102 does include expenditure on the library staff who are, in fact, assigned to the Directorate of Press and Information Services.

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(1) Amended budget.

(2) Including the operating (but not installation) costs of the new television studio, which came into service in 1980.

In September 1973 the Committee of Ministers decided to transfer the Documentation Section and Library from the Directorate of Economic and Social Affairs (which was originally known as the 'Research Department') to the Directorate of Press and Information Services, as recommended by the Management Survey Committee. The Management Survey Committee had based its recommendation on the proposition that the Directorate of Press and Information Services should have overall responsibility for both external information and internal information, and saw the Documentation Section and Library as one element forming the nucleus of the internal information sub-unit of the Directorate.

The purpose of including in the reply to Opinions No. 100 and 102 an indication of the growth in expenditure on staff assigned to the Directorate of Press and Information Services was to illustrate in a general way the successful efforts that the Committee of Ministers has been able to make, despite budgetary constraints, to reinforce that sector. It was not considered appropriate, in the context of the reply to the Opinions, to enter into an analysis of what is done by whom in the Directorate.

A further point to make with regard to paragraph (d) of the Written Question is that in its external information action the Directorate of Press and Information Services is able to call upon the support of and contributions from Secretariat officials who are not assigned to that Directorate.

Paragraph (e)

Deducting expenditure relating to the staff of the library from the figure of FF 14,621,000, leaves a sum of FF 12,419,000 for 1981; the corresponding figure for 1977 was FF 6,424,000. The difference of FF 5,995,000 represents an increase of 93% between 1977 and 1981."