

EP budget for 2014: Parliament must continue to show restraint

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The European Parliament adopted today the preliminary estimates of revenue and expenditure for its 2014 financial year - the first phase in the EP budget process. This first set of figures presented in February by the Secretary General of the Parliament, called for a budget of € 1.8 billion (3.47% increase over 2013), in order to finance the one off costs in 2014 of the European Parliament elections and the full accession of Croatia. The EP has already negotiated to cut this increase down by € 5 million, with the full expectation of further decreases in the second phase of the budget after the summer. An amendment tabled by the ALDE group, calling for any final budget increase to be reduced to within a real terms freeze , strictly in line with the inflation rate , was unfortunately rejected in the Plenary vote. This would have guaranteed that a further 25 million euros of savings would be found by the final vote in October this year.

ALDE spokesperson on the dossier George Lyon (LibDem, UK) said: "We need to be consistent with what we ask for in the European Parliament, and after freezing the administrative budget in the last two years in solidarity with Member State consolidation efforts, the Parliament must continue to show restraint".

"The 2014 budget will be unique, with European Parliament elections to be held in May and with the first full year of Croatian accession incurring their own costs, but I am pleased that the Parliament has taken this first step in the budget process and all Members are committed to working closely with the Administration of the Parliament to reach a final deal after the summer".

"While we would have preferred to see a commitment to freeze the Parliament budget as a guideline for our second phase of negotiations in the Autumn, I welcome the cross-party agreement to look for further savings".

"At a time when finances are tight it is only right that the European Parliament exercise the same restraint as families and businesses across Europe who are working hard to balance the books".

"The fact that we have already been able to cut travel costs and freeze allowances is welcome but it is clear that there is more work that needs to be done", he concluded.