

Furthermore, the Budget Committee unanimously adopted the following committee statement regarding the establishment of a Budget Office in Parliament:

"The Budget Committee takes note of the enclosed agreement between the parliamentary groups and assumes that the necessary steps for implementation will be taken as part of the resolution on the Federal Finance Act 2012 and Federal Medium-Term Expenditure Framework Act 2013-2016."

The agreement between the parliamentary groups is as follows:

"On 6 July, the group leaders of the five parliamentary groups in the Budget Committee agreed that the group secretaries should put down on paper the undisputed points concerning the future Budget Office and submit a proposal for a regulation on its use. The group leaders then intend to submit this paper to the President and request that the Budget Office be set up accordingly."

The group leaders agree on the following points:

- According to the paper presented by the President in the President's Conference on 25 March 2011, the Budget Office is to be set up as variant 2, i.e. as an extended committee secretariat.
- The Budget Office is to be set up for the time being without legislative changes.
- The Budget Office is to comprise six academics, primarily economists, and two assistants. In a first phase, two academics and one assistant will be provisionally advertised in autumn 2011 based on the staffing plan of the Parliamentary Administration. The Budget Office will therefore start its activities as agreed on 1 January 2012. The additional positions will be created as part of an amendment to the staffing plan when the 2012 budget is adopted. The head of the Budget Office is part of these eight positions. The appointment is to be preceded by a presentation to the group leaders.
- All enquiries to and results of the Budget Office are sent to all parliamentary groups after being sent to the enquirer and are then published on the Parliament's website.
- With regard to the provision of information, it is assumed that the respective ministries and other public bodies will provide all relevant information in accordance with Article 22 of the Federal Constitutional Act. Should this prove difficult in practice, an appropriate legal obligation to provide information will be established.
- The tasks of the Budget Office are already outlined in point 2 of the five-party agreement. The product catalogue is to be drawn up by the head of the Budget Office together with the group leaders and could include the following products:

The tasks of the Budget Office include, in particular, preparing ongoing analyses and responding to enquiries from Members of Parliament/parliamentary groups. The aim is to support parliamentary work in budget matters.

Ongoing analyses: The continuous work on important government bills (drafts of the federal medium-term expenditure framework and federal budget statements including budget accompanying acts, Federal Government reports on performance budgeting, etc.) is mandatory and focuses on four analytical areas:

- Macro analyses, i.e. estimates of the financial impact on various areas/sectors (e.g. growth, employment)
- Sustainability analyses, i.e. budget policy and major programmes and measures are examined for economic, ecological and social sustainability
- Distributional analyses estimate the effects of budgets or budget policy measures or programmes on individuals and households
- Analyses of public finances calculate the financial effects of specific discretionary measures or programmes (e.g. tax measures or transfer programmes, etc.), to the extent that these are not already included in the government proposals.

The ongoing analyses of the Budget Office include the substantive monitoring of the implementation of performance-based budgeting. In line with the objectives of the new budget law, the focus must also be placed on examining gender equality.

The ongoing analyses must be submitted to the Budget Committee in good time for the relevant negotiations in the Budget Committee.

Additional analyses are carried out by the Budget Office on the basis of requests from the Members of the Budget Committee or the Budget Committee itself. These are short enquiries or short studies that are processed as quickly as possible in the order in which they are received and in accordance with staffing capacities. As a rule, the length of the response should not exceed two pages for short enquiries and five pages for short studies. The corresponding requests are addressed directly to the head of the Budget Office in a standardized manner. The President is asked to organize this procedure by means of an internal directive.

For the time being, no specific regulation for the "utilization" of the Budget Office by the respective parliamentary groups will be introduced. However, should the head of the Budget Office report to the Budget Committee that the Budget Office's ability to work is suffering as a result of disproportionate requests from individual parliamentary groups, the following regulation will come into force:

Each parliamentary group can submit three enquiries per month to the Budget Office, which must be answered with priority. The Budget Committee can submit enquiries to the Budget Office by majority vote.

Provided that the three questions from the parliamentary groups and the questions from the Budget Committee have been answered, any further enquiries from parliamentary groups or members of Parliament will be dealt with in proportion to their respective strength in the Budget Committee (currently SP8:VP8:FP5:G3:BZ2).

The head of the Budget Office shall submit an annual report on the activities of the Budget Office to the Budget Committee."

As a result of its deliberations, the Budget Committee therefore **proposes** that the National Council pass a resolution:

The draft Federal Finance Act 2012 submitted by the Federal Government in the version of the **attached amendments** (Annex)

and its Annex I - Federal Budget 2012 in the version of the **attached amendments** to budget chapter 40 (Economy) together with Annexes I.a to I.c - General overviews, taking into account the amendments resulting from the above changes,

Annex II – Personnel offices - gross presentation,

the Annex III - Financing, Currency swap agreements - gross presentation and

the Annex IV - Personnel plan

(1405 of the annexes) is granted constitutional approval.

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