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SEMINAR
ON
RESULTS BASED BUDGETING:
OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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Opening by Gabriella BATTAINI-DRAGONI

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- Thank you Mr Hjalmarsson. And thank you also collectively to the Budget Committee for the idea of organising this seminar. This is an excellent opportunity for all of us together, Permanent Representations, Members of the Budget Committee and External Auditor, as well as the Secretariat, to take stock of all the progress made by this Organisation in the way it presents itself and its work, and to prepare future improvements.
- I should also like to thank the President of the GR-PBA, Ambassador Gediminas Šerkšnys for his support and for the very constructive approach that the GR-PBA has adopted in helping the Secretary General design the Programme and Budget in its current form.
- Ladies and gentlemen, as you know Result Based Budgeting was introduced in this Organisation only in 2006, we were therefore relatively late compared to several national governments and to some other international organisations. The introduction of an RBB approach started a radical change in the way the Council of Europe would design and present its activities. This has resulted in the present form of our **Programme and Budget**.
- In January 2010 the Secretary General launched an in-depth reform process with the aim of raising the political profile of the Organisation and focussing its work on what it does best. One of the cornerstones of the reform was the new Programme and Budget, which, starting from 2011 brought more coherence, information and clarity to **what we do, why we do it and how much it costs**.
- In June 2011, to allow better planning and more coordination with our strategic partners, the Committee of Ministers decided to introduce a **biennial programme and budget** following similar moves in other international organisations, including the United Nations and OECD. This has helped us improve our strategic focus, and we have aligned the intergovernmental sector with our two-year programme. It has also helped in other ways, for example in the way we deal with the increasing flow of extrabudgetary resources, which typically fund projects lasting several years.
- We should bear in mind that the Programme and Budget does not mirror the structural setup of the Organisation but the **substance** and the **resources**. The setup with three thematic pillars, **Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Democracy**, as well as the **support pillar, has become the undisputed platform for the Organisation's Programme**.

- The thematic pillars are divided into sectors, which are composed of multiple programme lines. The latter represent the working level in the Programme and Budget document that covers, together with intergovernmental activities, institutions, partial agreements and independent mechanisms. It also covers all existing budgetary votes and the three operational dimensions which are the trademark of our Organisation: **standard setting, monitoring and co-operation**.
- During the past years we have constantly tried to improve the way we design objectives, expected results and performance indicators across areas. We have also factored in the different ways of financing of the Organisation - ordinary budget, joint Council of Europe/European Union programmes, voluntary contributions, budgets of partial agreements – and the way they interact with each other.
- As you can see, the Programme and Budget is built on relatively complex parameters. Finding a consistent and efficient approach to designing the objectives is a challenge in such a multi-dimensional Programme and Budget. However, I can say that this challenge was globally met, and the Committee of Ministers has confirmed this during the past two years.
- At the same time, there are areas which can and must be further improved. This has been clearly expressed by GR-PBA and the Budget Committee. There must be more precision in our definitions.
- But we should also go even further than that. It is not enough to explain well **What We Do** and **How**. At times this becomes little more than a presentation of our activities. This is not results-based budgeting. We have to become better at explaining **What we want to achieve and what our resources really are**. A key question is: **What is the real change that our specific action should lead to?**
- However, as we move firmly away from outputs and go towards the definition of real results and their costs, we also encounter many fundamental questions. For instance the question of responsibility. Outputs, like expertises and training events, are the responsibility of the Secretariat. However, end-results are all about shared responsibility between the stakeholders, including Member States. Therefore we must also reflect on our processes, and ways of co-ordinating and contributing between stakeholders. We must have more inclusive and participatory ways of addressing the expected and final results.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I am very glad that we today, under the auspices of the Budget Committee, have brought together prominent experts in the fields of Result Based Budgeting and evaluation of public policies, members of permanent representations to the Council of Europe and staff members in charge of the elaboration, the implementation and the follow-up of the Programme and Budget. The aim of this seminar is to reflect on the best and most reasonable way of applying Results-Based Budgeting to an international organisation as diverse as the Council of Europe.
- I do not intend to get into the technical aspects of our work today, I gladly leave that to our two keynote speakers, **Virginie Besrest** and **Ian Davies**, and I trust them, the distinguished other members of each panel and all of you to help sharpening our tools for the preparation of the Programme and Budget for the next biennium, which will start as early as November this year and which I will coordinate personally.

I thank you for your attention and I strongly encourage members of permanent representations and staff members present in this room to actively participate in the work of each session.