



BANC DES MINISTRES

Joint Support and Logistics

Finance bill for 2019

Mr le député Claude DE GANAY

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Engagement opérationnel

The 2019 budget bill (PLF) increases support. In all, nearly €5.3 billion in payment appropriations excluding staff expenditure will be allocated to them in 2019, an increase of 6.9% compared to 2018. The draftsman of the opinion can only welcome a budget that matches the ambition of the Military Planning Law (LPM) 2019-2025. Beyond the figures, this satisfaction nevertheless deserves to be tempered.

A substantial part of the additional appropriations - EUR 200 million - is devoted to "sincerising" the financing of the additional costs of external and internal operations. These are appropriations which, it should be stressed from the outset, will not benefit the "improvement of the 'daily life' of the soldier" intended by the MPA. Moreover, despite the resources devoted to it, this "sincerisation" remains partial and progressive: inter-ministerial funding will remain necessary throughout the duration of the LPM, even if it should be less and less important.

With regard to the resources that will actually benefit the staff of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, the Government has raised, through its promises, high expectations that risk turning into disappointment if it does not pay more attention to the practical implementation of its commitments. Both the implementation of the "Family Plan" and the renovation of the housing stock are overdue. All this does not bode well for our soldiers at a time when armies are facing a formidable challenge in terms of attractiveness and loyalty.

In the course of his work, the Rapporteur for Opinion has focused on the outsourcing of joint support and logistics. The development of outsourcing practices, as a result of the reforms carried out under the aegis of the General Review of Public Policies (RGPP), is continuing today. This opinion is in line with the numerous reports drawn up by the two chambers of Parliament as part of their mission to evaluate public policies (1).

The work carried out has made it possible to highlight several shortcomings in the

practices of outsourcing the armed forces. These facts demonstrate the fragility of the legal framework for outsourcing, the shortcomings of internal and external control, and the persistence of behaviour that parliamentarians had already been able to highlight in the past.

In order to explore these conclusions, which are still partial, the Rapporteur for Opinion calls for the creation of a fact-finding mission, whose mission will be led by a member of the Committee of Ministers. This field, without being limited to outsourcing, could integrate several themes relating to the organisation of support.

This opinion was also an opportunity to look at a relatively unknown service: the Army Fuel Service (AFS). This service is, through its oil support activity, one of the guarantors of the armed forces' autonomy. The Rapporteur for opinion wishes to pay special tribute to the staff of the AES who take considerable risks to supply the forces as close to the battlefield as possible.

Today the AES is in a state of "operational overheating". The service suffers from a mismatch between the degree of commitment of the armed forces and the resources allocated to it. Between 2011 and 2018, the AES has lost 12.3% of its personnel, even though the service is engaged in more numerous, larger and bolder theatres of operation.

The MPL, which provides for an increase of only 15 personnel until 2022, does not seem to have taken the measure of the situation. The draftsman of the opinion expresses the hope that a serious supply disruption will not be necessary for our authorities to realise that the efforts required of this service are far too high.

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(1) Among others, we can cite the information report of Senators Yves Krattinger and Dominique de Legge in 2014 and the information report of MP François Cornut-Gentile in 2017.

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