

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Data Protection Supervisor

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report drawn up by Søren Bo SØNDERGAARD (GUE/NGL, DK) recommending that the Parliament grant the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007.

The committee recalls that, in 2007, the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of EUR 5 million (compared to EUR 4.1 million in 2006), representing an increase of nearly 20% as compared with 2006, with a utilisation rate of 86.14% (below the average of the other institutions. MEPs also note the increase in permanent posts of the EDPS and welcome, in this context, the EDPS' intention of restricting expansion in both tasks and staff, using controlled growth to ensure that new staff are fully taken on board and adequately integrated and trained.

Noting that the Court of Auditors' audit of the EDPS did not give rise to any significant observations, MEPs welcome the first audit report issued by the Internal Audit Service (IAS), which identified certain issues requiring improvement (including the implementation of IAS recommendations agreed by the EDPS).

Moreover, they recall that that on 7 December 2006 the Administrative Cooperation Agreement between the Secretaries-General of the Commission, Parliament and the Council, signed together with the EDPS, was renewed for a further period of three years with effect from 16 January 2007.

Welcoming the annual publication by the EDPS and the Assistant EDPS of a declaration of their financial interests, MEPs congratulate the EDPS on its decision of 12 September 2007 to accede to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 25 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning internal investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

They also request that the EDPS include in its 2008 activity report a chapter giving a detailed account of the follow-up during the year to Parliament's earlier discharge decisions.

Lastly, MEPs regret the fact that, despite amendments to the Financial Regulation, its rules on procurement are still excessively cumbersome for smaller institutions, such as the EDPS. They therefore call on the Commission to consult extensively with the EDPS in order to ensure that its concerns are fully taken into account in the final draft.