2008 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

2009/2074(DEC) - 23/03/2010

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ryszard CZARNECKI (ECR, PL) recommending the European Parliament to grant the Committee of the Regions' Secretary-General discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2008.

The committee notes that in 2008 the Committee of Regions (CoR) had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of **EUR 93 million** (EUR 68.6 million in 2007), with a utilisation rate of 86.87%.

Members welcome the follow-up of the Parliament's earlier discharge decisions, in particular, on the Parliament's observations on the OLAF report and the administrative inquiry on weighted salary transfers, where all the amounts unduly received by the officials concerned have been paid back, disciplinary procedures have been opened, and recommendations issued by the internal auditor have been implemented or are in the process of implementation. Members also welcome the follow-up on the management and control system within the own services and the follow-up on the issue of management and control services within the EESC/CoR joint services.

Overall, Members welcome the implementation of the **Administrative Cooperation Agreement between the CoR and the Economic and Social Committee for the period 2008 to 2014**, and invite the two Committees to communicate the progress made as regards harmonising their internal control standards, as well as relevant financial procedures relating to the Joint Services.

They welcome the results of the evaluation of the mini-cooperation agreements in the areas affected by de-coupling, as carried out jointly by the CoR and the EESC, in particular, their conclusions that the new governance structure has improved the administrative cooperation between the Committees, that de-coupled services have maintained quality and improved efficiency, and that no supplementary budget means were needed. They also note the conclusion that some practical aspects of the cooperation should be improved in the future.

Members welcome the ongoing improvements in the internal control environment of the CoR. They note that the risk assessment exercise carried out in 2008 had identified two areas of concern: firstly, issues resulting from the change of the organisation chart and the consequences of the new cooperation agreement between the CoR and the EESC, where an adaptation period was still ongoing, and, secondly, personnel-related issues caused by too high job rotation. They expect these issues to be followed up in the next annual activity report of the CoR.

Lastly, Members request that CoR members declare their financial interests.