2008 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2009/2075(DEC) - 23/03/2010

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

Firstly, the committee notes that in 2008 the Ombudsman had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of EUR 9 million (2008: EUR 8.2 million), with a utilisation rate of 91.51%, below the average of the other institutions (95.67%).

The Court of Auditors indicated in its annual report that the audit did not give rise to any significant observations as regards the Ombudsman. MEPs note a trend of persistent growth over the period from 2003 to 2008, during which time commitment appropriations doubled from EUR 4.4 million to EUR 9 million, and the number of posts increased from 31 to 57 units (with 6 more posts in 2009), while complaints have increased from 2 436 to 3 346 and new enquiries opened from 253 to 293.

As regards the internal audit, Members welcome the findings, in particular the observation that the procurement process had considerably improved, as well as the process for awarding grants. They note however, that the internal audit also revealed areas with scope for further improvement, in particular: procurement procedure files should include more complete information, delivery-due date modifications should only be allowed in exceptional cases, better planning of timing for tendering procedures, inconsistent clauses in contracts to be corrected before signature. They call on the Ombudsman to follow up these issues and report to the Parliament in its activity report.