

2008 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2009/2075(DEC) - 05/05/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a decision on discharge to be granted to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2008.

Furthermore, Parliament adopted a resolution with observations which are an integral part of the decision to grant discharge.

Firstly, the resolution 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. Parliament notes 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. Parliament notes that, since the internal restructuring in 2008, 24 of the 57 posts are now involved in examining complaints.

As regards the internal audit, Parliament welcomes the findings, in particular the observation that the procurement process had considerably improved, as well as the process for awarding grants. It notes, 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. It calls on the Ombudsman to follow up these issues and report to the Parliament in its activity report.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the Ombudsman's decision to publish the annual declaration of interests of the Ombudsman and to publish it on its website.