2008 discharge: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ECDC

2009/2124(DEC) - 05/05/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 556 votes to 32, with 53 abstentions, a decision on discharge to be granted to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) 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.

The main points are as follows:

- performance: Parliament welcomes the fact that the Centre consolidated its public health functions, enhanced the capacities of its disease-specific programmes, further developed partnerships and improved its managerial structures. It calls on the Centre to set out, in its table to be annexed to the Court of Auditors' next report, a comparison of operations carried out during the year for which discharge is to be granted and in the previous financial year, so as to enable the discharge authority to assess its performance more effectively from one year to the next;
- carry-over of appropriations: Parliament notes that about EUR 16 200 000 (representing 40% of the Centre's total budget) have had to be carried over; is consequently concerned that this situation is at odds with the principle of annuality and shows weaknesses in the programming and subsequent implementation of the Centre's budget. Moreover, other information shows that the Centre's cash reserves amounted to EUR 16 705 090.95 on 31 December 2008. It, therefore, calls on the Commission to examine ways of ensuring that the principle of needs-based cash management to ensure that the Centre's cash reserves are kept as low as possible on a long-term basis;
- the Centre's seat: noting that, as of 31 December 2008, there was still no agreement on the Centre's seat with the Swedish Government and that, in its discharge for the financial year 2007, the discharge authority had already expressed concern at the Court of Auditors' observation that the Centre had disbursed additional expenditure on renovation works on the buildings rented for its premises, Parliament welcomes the fact that an agreement was concluded in March 2009 on personal identity numbers that will enable staff working at the Centre to access certain public services. It supports the Centre's efforts with the Swedish government to find definitive solutions;
- human resources: Parliament points out that there are still weaknesses in the planning of recruitment but that, by the end of 2008, considerable recruitment had ensured that the Centre could carry out its tasks effectively;
- internal audit: although Parliament deplores the Centre's slowness in providing certain information in relation to its internal audit, it nevertheless recognises that the Centre gave certain information on the quality of its management, follow-up action in respect of certain internal control standards and the implementation of other internal control standards.

Noting that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2008 are reliable, and the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament approves the closure of the Centre's accounts. However, it makes a number of recommendations that need to be taken into account when the discharge is granted, in addition to the general recommendations that appear in the draft resolution on financial management and control of EU agencies (see 2010/2007(INI) adopted in parallel).