2008 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

2009/2073(DEC) - 05/05/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a decision aiming to grant discharge to the European Economic and Social Committee's Secretary-General in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2008.

The Parliament also adopted a resolution containing a number of observations which forms an integral part of the discharge decision. The resolution notes that in 2008 the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of **EUR 118 million** (EUR 116 million in 2007), with a utilisation rate of 95.64%, the same as the average of the other institutions (95.67%).

The Parliament notes that the Court of Auditors indicated in its annual report that the audit did not give rise to any significant observations as regards the EESC.

Parliament also points to the remark made by the Court of Auditors on the different approach of the EESC (as well as the Parliament) when applying the provisions of the Staff Regulations as regards the multiplication factor. It points out that the EESC thereby grants its staff a financial advantage not granted by the other institutions, and that that results in higher expenses. It reiterates that the provisions of the Staff Regulations concerning the multiplication factor should be interpreted and implemented by all the institutions in the same way and notes the EESC's intention to adapt its practice in conformity with the awaited Civil Service Tribunal's ruling.

Welcoming the implementation of the **Administrative Cooperation Agreement between the EESC and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) for the period 2008 to 2014**, Parliament invites the EESC and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) to communicate the progress made as regards harmonising their internal control standards, as well as relevant financial procedures relating to the Joint Services.

Parliament recalls that de-coupling resulting from the Administrative Cooperation Agreement should be budget neutral, and is looking forward to the mid-term review of the Agreement, due in 2011. It welcomes the results of evaluation of the mini-cooperation agreements in the areas affected by de-coupling, as carried out jointly by the EESC and the CoR, in particular, their conclusions that the new governance structure has improved the administrative cooperation between the Committees.

Furthermore, Members urge that **travel expenses of members of the EESC** should be based only on actual travel costs. They suggest that daily allowances should be equal to the ones received by the Members of the European Parliament.

Lastly, Parliament recalls that members of the EESC do not declare their financial interests or disclose relevant information on declarable professional activities and remunerated posts or activities. It requests that the EESC introduces this obligation for its members without delay.