2009 discharge: European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit EUROJUST

2010/2174(DEC) - 21/03/2011

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Georgios STAVRAKAKIS (S&D, EL) on discharge to be granted to the Administrative Director of EUROJUST for implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2009.

Noting that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2009 are reliable, and the underlying transactions are legal and regular, MEPs approve the closure of the Agency's accounts. However, they make 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 DEC/2010/2271):

- **performance:** Members welcome the Agency's initiative to include Key Performance Indicators in its 2010 unit plans and call for the linking of these indicators to Eurojust's objectives, budget and work programme in order to better evaluate Eurojust's performance;
- **carryover of appropriations**: Members call on the Agency to inform the discharge authority of the steps taken to avoid carrying forward appropriations, such carrying forward of appropriations has been a constant issue during the previous discharge procedures;
- **improvement in procurement procedures**: Members congratulate the Agency for establishing measures to estimate the market value of relevant products/services before commencing a procurement procedure. They consider that this initiative an important practice to be followed by other agencies. They welcome, in addition, the Agency's annual procurement plan for 2009;
- **human resources:** noting shortcomings in the planning and implementation of recruitment procedures, Members call on the Agency to set up a comprehensive recruitment action plan to significantly reduce the vacancy rate. They acknowledge that the Agency launched its new recruitment procedure in 2009 which provided that members of the selection board shall only invite applicants to interviews who score a minimum of 75 % on the preliminary evaluation but express concern that three out of six middle management (Head of Unit) posts at the Agency were filled on a temporary basis by "acting" staff members. Members underline that this situation indicates difficulties in attracting and retaining the right staff. However, they welcome the Agency's plan to adopt a decision which will provide that the final assessment of applicants will be based on the combination of the grade given at the moment of the completion of the application form, and the result of interviews and written tests as they consider that this approach is an improvement of the Agency's selection procedures as it takes into account, in an effective manner, each candidate's merits;
- **internal audit**: lastly, Members call on Eurojust to take measures to improve recruitment procedures, reduce the number of interim staff, restructure the human resources unit, develop an HR management plan, reinforce the monitoring of HR activities and review the content of the register of exceptions.