2009 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Justice

2010/2145(DEC) - 22/03/2011

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Crescenzio RIVELLINI (EPP, IT) recommending the European Parliament to grant the Court of Justice's Registrar discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2009.

The committee cites that in 2009 the European Court of Justice (ECJ) had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of **EUR 318 million** (2008: EUR 297 million), with a utilisation rate of 98.5%, higher than the average of the other institutions (97.69%).

Members note that the Court of Auditors performed an in-depth assessment of supervisory and control systems in the Court of Justice, the European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor which included the examination of an additional sample of transactions involving payments relating to human resources and to other administrative expenditure. As far as the Court of Justice is concerned, this assessment had broadly positive results.

However, the Court of Auditors indicated in its annual report that the Court of Justice failed to anticipate the expiry of a framework contract, and ordered services amounting to EUR 102 000 without applying competitive procurement procedures. Recalling that for the financial year 2008, a similar criticism was made; Member call on the Court of Justice to ensure that **procurement procedures are better prepared and coordinated**.

As regards the rest, Members welcome the fact that there were no other negative observations made by the Court of Auditors and note the good overall functioning of control and monitoring systems, as well as that of the internal audit unit of the Court of Justice.

Members welcome the increase in the number of cases completed by the Court of Justice (377

judgments and 165 orders compared to 333 and 161 respectively in 2008), and note that the number of preliminary ruling cases was the highest ever (302). They also note that the duration of the proceedings was practically unchanged, and welcomes the decrease in the number of cases pending at the end of 2009 (741 cases compared to 768 cases at the end of 2008). They, however, note the backlog of pending cases at the General Court continued to increase (from 1178 in 2008 to 1191 in 2009).

Members also welcome:

- the ongoing successful cooperation in the sphere of training with other institutions and with the European Administrative School;
- the modernisation of the Court of Justice's work methods, in particular computerisation of the Registry of the Court of Justice, where the Paper Register dating back to 1952 had finally been replaced by Electronic Register;
- the good interinstitutional cooperation on buildings, security, environmental protection and administrative management.

Lastly, they note the difficulties the Court of Justice experienced as regards recruitment of qualified conference interpreters, and the limitations as well as the need to use a range of interpretation techniques in order to be able to qualitatively and quantitatively satisfy all requests for interpretation. Given the

importance of interpretation for proper functioning of judicial work, the Court of Justice should report on this in its upcoming annual reports.