2009 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

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

The committee cites that in 2009 the European Ombudsman had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of **EUR 9 million** (as in 2008), with a utilisation rate of 91.98%, lower 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 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 European Ombudsman is concerned, it would appear that it had not adopted general provisions on the procedures for recruitment of temporary staff, although the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union requires that each institution shall have done so. This omission may affect a majority of the Ombudsman's staff, as 47 out of 63 posts granted under the 2009 budget were temporary posts. Members welcome the fact that the Ombudsman has instructed his services to draft provisions on the procedures for recruitment of temporary staff to be adopted in accordance with the observation of the Court of Auditors.

They also note that in 2009:

- the Ombudsman was able to help with almost 77% of all complaints, and that he dealt with 70% of inquiries in less than one year,
- the key performance indicators in the Annual Management Plan were implemented and the objectives for 2009 were achieved,
- the Ombudsman's decision to publish the annual declaration of interests of the Ombudsman and the fact that the declaration is published on the Ombudsman's website.

Lastly, Members take note of the audits carried out by the Internal Audit Service (IAS), in particular its annual report, and of the follow up of the IAS reviews of management and control system for missions and payroll areas, which concluded that all the actions contained in the reviews had been implemented. They stress that the audit of the processing of the payment requests has identified several issues to be addressed by the management, and invites the Ombudsman to follow that up in his next annual activity report.