2009 discharge: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions EUROFOUND

2010/2167(DEC) - 12/10/2010 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation by the Court of Auditors of its report on the annual accounts of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) for the financial year 2009, together with the Foundation's replies.

CONTENT: in accordance with the tasks and objectives conferred on it by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Court of Auditors, in the context of the discharge procedure, addresses to the European Parliament and the Council a Statement of Assurance on the reliability of the annual accounts, as well as of the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them of each EU institution, body or agency, on the basis of an external, independent audit.

This audit also covered the annual accounts of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND).

In the Court's opinion, **the Foundation's annual accounts presented "fairly, in all material respects", its financial position as of 31 December 2009** and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Regulation.

The Court also stated that the **transactions underlying the annual accounts** of the Agency for the financial year ended 31 December 2009 were, "in all material respects, **legal and regular**".

The report again confirmed that the Foundation's 2009 final budget amounted to EUR 20.2 million. The number of staff employed by the Agency at the end of the year was 94.

The report also included comments on the Foundation's budgetary and financial management, together with its replies. The main comments are as follows:

The Court's comments:

- significant delays in the preparation and presentation of the Foundation's Accounts; the initial provisional accounts presented by the Foundation contained serious shortcomings, pointing to significant weaknesses in the Foundation's Financial organisation;
- lack of transparency in the selection procedures;
- errors and anomalies in the evaluation of an open procurement procedure.

The Foundation's replies:

- Eurofound's commitment to respect the deadlines for presenting its accounts;
- improvement of the selection procedures for personnel;
- evaluation and review procedures shall be strengthened.

Lastly, the Court of Auditor's report contained a summary of the **Foundation's activities in 2009** in the following areas:

- monitoring and surveys: second European Quality of Life Survey: overview report based on 35 000 interviews in 31 countries published;

- work on the following themes: employment and competitiveness; Industrial relations and workplace development; social cohesion and quality of life;

- communication and sharing ideas and experience: 152 443 print publications disseminated; 637 new web and print publications; 803 contacts and briefing meetings with European level policy makers; EUR 1.6 million user sessions; media activities resulted in reaching 114 million European citizens.