2009 discharge: EU general budget, Council

2010/2144(DEC) - 09/09/2010

PURPOSE: to present the report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2009 (other institutions – Council).

CONTENT: the Court of Auditors published its 33rd annual report on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union, covering the financial year 2009.

Pursuant to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Court of Auditors provides the European Parliament and the Council with a Statement of Assurance concerning the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions ('the DAS').

For the first time, the Court is forwarding its annual report to national parliaments at the same time as to the European Parliament and the Council, as provided for under Protocol No 1 to the Treaty of Lisbon.

This audit concerns, in particular, the budget implementation of the Council.

Based on its audit work, the Court concludes that the payments for the year ended 31 December 2009 for administrative expenditure of the institutions were free from material error. The Court notes that all the institutions operated satisfactorily the supervisory and control systems required by the Financial Regulation and the transactions tested were free from material error of legality and regularity.

Although the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts have been confirmed by the Court of Auditors, it does however draw attention to a number of findings which should be taken into consideration by the institutions concerned. It recalls that the main risks in the administrative and other expenditure policy group are non-compliance with the provisions on procurement, the implementation of contracts, recruitment procedures and the calculation of salaries and allowances.

Based on its audit work, the Court states that in the area of the payment of social allowances, the Court recommended to the Institutions and bodies concerned that they request their staff to deliver at appropriate intervals documents confirming their personal situation and that they implement a system for the timely monitoring of these documents.

The specific observations that follow and which are presented by Institution or body of the European Union are based on the Court's audit. These findings do not call into question the positive assessments as they are not material to administrative expenditure as a whole but are significant in the context of the individual Institution concerned.

In the specific case of the Council's audit, the Court notes the following:

- **procurement**: in two out of six procurement procedures audited, the rules set in the Financial Regulation for the publication of the outcome of the procedure in contract award notices were not respected.

Follow-up to observations from past annual reports: the audit gave rise to remarks on actions and decisions taken as a follow-up to observations from past Annual Reports. In particular as regards the S ESAME programme (*Secured European System for Automatic Messaging*) (2008 Report), the Court recalls that the target completion date for this programmes used to prepare the Council's annual budgets was consistently overoptimistic. There were many changes to the initial project design and there was no

agreement among Member States on how to treat certain kinds of sensitive information. As a result the annual budget for SESAME was overestimated each year.In 2009, the EUR 2.7 million budget for SESAME was again overestimated by EUR 2.4 million. However, the implementation of the Low Classified Segment of SESAME has been authorized by the Member States in the Political and Security Committee in October 2009. The project can thus be launched. According to the Court, the Council should ensure that budgetary appropriations made available for the SESAME project are in line with the state of implementation of the project.