2009 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Auditors

2010/2146(DEC) - 10/05/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 571 votes to 78, with 10 abstentions a decision to grant discharge to the Court of Auditors' Secretary-General in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2009.

Furthermore, Parliament adopted by 496 votes to 142, with 14 abstentions a resolution with observations which are an integral part of the decision to grant discharge.

The resolution recalls that, in 2009, the Court of Auditors had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of EUR 188 million (2008: EUR 133 million), with a utilisation rate of 92.19%, below the average of the other institutions (97.69%).

Recalling that, as regards the financial year 2009, the Court's accounts were audited by an external firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers and that the conclusions were favourable, Parliament notes that the 2009 report of the Court's internal auditor was very positive.

Parliament welcomes the audit strategy of the Court of Auditors for the period 2009 to 2012 and supports its priority goals (maximising the overall impact from its audits and increasing efficiency by making best use of resources). It welcomes, in particular, the Court’s intention to publish follow-up reports concerning special reports in order to give them greater weight. It notes the considerably increased number of the reports produced by the Court of Auditors, in particular, the increase of the number of special reports and points out that these latter reports contribute to the better control of the Union’s finances. However, Parliament is concerned about the reduced amount of detailed information provided in the Court’s annual reports on the agencies.

Parliament notes 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 of payments relating to human resources and to other administrative expenditure. It calls on the Court to continue and broaden this practice, in particular, to consider performing **an in-depth assessment of supervisory and control systems in the Council**.

At the same time, Parliament considers that the cooperation between the Court of Auditors and Parliament could be enhanced by streamlining working methods and by improving further the synergies between the two institutions. It welcomes the measures taken by the Court to reform and improve its role in line with Parliament’s requests, with a view to giving greater impact to its assessments and checks.

In relation to declarations of members' financial interests, Parliament calls once again for these to be made accessible on the Internet by the Court of Auditors in accordance with the institution’s code of conduct, via a public register.

Lastly, Parliament recalls that objectivity, impartiality, excellence and professionalism are the Court of Auditors’ key values and considers that **deeper reflection on the news that recently appeared in the media should be carried out**. It recalls, in this regard, that it awaits with interest the ‘follow up peer review’ that the Court of Auditors intends to launch during 2011 (three years after the positive peer review of 2008) and announces that Parliament intends to produce an own-initiative report on possible

improvements that could be proposed to the Court of Auditors. It also invites the President of the Court of Auditors to present the results of this review to Parliament's competent committee.