2010 discharge: European Police College (CEPOL)

2011/2230(DEC) - 06/09/2011 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Police College (EPC), together with the College's reply.

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

This audit concerned, amongst others, the annual accounts of the European Police College (EPC).

In the Court's opinion, **the College's Annual Accounts fairly present, in all material respects, its financial position as of 31 December 2010** 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 considers that **the transactions underlying the annual accounts** of the College for the financial year ended 31 December 2010 are, in all material respects, **legal and regular.**

The report confirms that the College's 2010 budget amounted to EUR 7.8 million, and that the number of staff employed by the College at the end of the year was 31.

The report also makes a series of observations on the budgetary and financial management of the EPC, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations:

- budgetary and financial management: more than EUR 1.6 million, equivalent to 48% of the appropriations carried over from 2009, had to be cancelled in 2010. This situation is at odds with the budgetary principle of annuality. Expenditure for organising courses and seminars represents a significant part of the College's budget. There was a lack of rigour in the College's process for approving cost claims related to such activities, particularly with regard to the completeness of supporting evidence;
- follow-up on previous audit findings: an external ex-post check on appropriations used to finance private expenditure during 2007 and 2008 has been carried out. The external reviewers considered that no further funds are recoverable in respect of this matter (see DEC/2008/2271 and DEC/2009/2127).

The College's replies:

- to avoid the repetition of the situation described by the Court, the carry-forward of 2010 appropriations has been subjected to strict criteria to minimise cancellations in 2011. In June 2011, all open commitments were reviewed to better monitor the budget consumption and optimise the 2011 budget implementation. CEPOL has revised the process for approving cost claims and their supporting evidence. In addition, it has organised a new training course for Course Managers to further improve the controls on courses as well as the quality of the payment files.
-

CEPOL acknowledges the comment of the Court. However, it will continue to try to recover as much as it is possible the funds not yet completely recovered.

Lastly the Court of Auditors' report contains a **summary of the College's activities** in 2010. These may be described as follows:

- courses and seminars: 91 courses, seminars and conferences were organised;
- external relations: the College signed Cooperation Agreements with the Turkish National Police Institute and the Croatian Police College. The College also signed revised Cooperation Agreements with the Icelandic National Police College and Norwegian Police University on 9 December 2010 and negotiations started with the Russian Federation, Georgia, Albania and Montenegro about future Cooperation Agreements;
- organisation of joint programmes with the Member States (in particular one on the subject of money laundering);
- implementation of the "Euromed Police II" project;

- exchange programme with 21 Member States and one candidate country;
- continuation of electronic network activities (e-Net): the College's website had 102,000 visitors.