2011 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

2012/2172(DEC) - 21/03/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Andrea EŠKOVÁ (ECR, CZ) in which it calls on the European Parliament to grant the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Economic and Social Committee budget for the financial year 2011.

Members welcome the fact that, on the basis of its audit work, the Court of Auditors concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2011 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

They point out that, in the 2011 annual report, the Court of Auditors included observations on the conclusion of contracts with temporary and contract staff, identifying some inconsistencies in the guidelines applicable to the grading and recruitment of staff. They call on the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to ensure that those inconsistencies do not recur.

Members also note that in 2011 the EESC had commitment appropriations of EUR 128.6 million available, with a utilisation rate of 95.4%, lower than the rate of 2010. This is mainly due to the Council's decision not to adopt the Commission's proposal for salary adjustments for 2011.

The report notes how Members are pleased with the achievements in the area of translation following the renewed EESC, Committee of the Regions Cooperation agreement. Further efforts are needed however.

Members also call for : (i) improvements as regards energy consumption; (ii) translation and interpretation services. They wish to see more detailed information included in the EESC's annual report on the provision of space for meetings organised by external civil-society organisations working in conjunction with the EESC.

It should be noted that in its resolutions of May 2011 and May 2012 granting discharge in respect of the implementation of the EESC budget, Parliament called on the European Ombudsman to inform it of **cases of maladministration** which had arisen within the EESC. They considered that Parliament should envisage the possibility to send this issue back to the competent parliamentary committee. They take note that the EESC has pledged, and has taken measures, to prevent similar situations from happening in future.