2011 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Auditors

2012/2171(DEC) - 17/04/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 558 votes to 40, with 11 abstentions, a decision to grant the Secretary-General of the Court of Auditors discharge in respect of the implementation of the Court of Auditors' budget for the financial year 2011.

In its resolution accompanying the discharge decision, Parliament noted that the Court of Auditors' annual accounts are audited by an independent external auditor in order to apply the same principles of transparency and accountability that it applies to its auditees. It emphasises that in 2011, the Court of Auditors' commitment appropriations amounted to a total of EUR 134.337 million and the implementation rate for those appropriations was 93% last year. It encourages the Court of Auditors to continue to assess the quality and impact of its work.

Staff: Parliament welcomes the reinforcement of audit posts in 2011, compared to the number of staff in other services. Plenary points to the considerable geographical imbalance as regards director posts: four nationals from the United Kingdom and one national from France, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland and Italy. It finds the **gender balance at the level of Directors and Heads of Units still very unbalanced** (72% male and 28% female) and points out the importance of geographical balance at all levels of staff. Members request that the Court of Auditors also provide a breakdown by nationality. Parliament calls on the Court of Auditors to maintain the best possible working environment for its staff and its Members in the future. It encourages the Court of Auditors to examine what lessons can be learned from the recently revealed harassment case and whether the procedure applied during the investigation by the Court of Auditors was fully in line with its Rules of Procedure. It calls for preventive measures to safeguard against workplace harassment and for details of all measures taken in respect of staff in the private offices of Members of the Court of Auditors.

On an operational level, Parliament notes that the Court of Auditors made a total of 379 audit visits in 2011, 343 to Member States and 36 to third countries. It calls on the Court of Auditors to increase both the number and effectiveness of on-site audit visits. It agrees with the internal audit service recommendations to create a new set of key performance indicators to measure the implementation of that strategy.

OLAF: lastly, Parliament notes that certain cases brought to light by the Court have been transferred to OLAF which is currently dealing with them. They concern 17 cases of possible suspected fraud to OLAF arising from denunciation letters received by the Court of Auditors. Parliament supports the Court of Auditors' continuous close cooperation with OLAF, and urges the Court of Auditors to assess whether – and, if so, how – this number can be increased in relation to the overall image, action and effectiveness of the Court of Auditors in this sector.