

2012 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2013/2203(DEC) - 21/03/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Bogusaw SONIK (EPP, PL) in which it called on the European Parliament to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of the European Ombudsman's budget for the financial year 2012.

Members welcomed 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 2012 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error. They observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics related to human resources and procurement for the Ombudsman.

Budgetary and financial management: Members noted that in 2012, the Ombudsman's budget amounted to EUR 9.5 million and that of the total appropriations, 98.3% were committed and 88.69% paid with a utilisation rate of 95.88% (compared to 92.54% for 2011). They endorsed the improvements on the financial planning so as to ensure a more efficient budget implementation and called for this effort to continue in the next budgetary exercises.

Ombudsman's framework action: Members also made a series of observations on the daily management of the Ombudsman and called for:

- clarification of the unused rate of the interpretation services;
- strengthening of the cooperation with other institutions to come up with a unified methodology of presenting the translation costs in order to simplify the analysis and comparison of the costs;
- clarification of the open actions from internal audit reports concerning the implementation of the minimum standards for internal control and the management of procurement procedures;
- the increase of the percentage of decisions on admissibility taken within one month of receiving a complaint;
- information on the amount spent on promoting itself and on reaching out to citizens.

Lastly, Members called for additional information on actions implemented to overcome the Commission's decision to **refuse the organisation of an independent external audit of the European Schools**.