2013 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

2014/2083(DEC) - 31/03/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ryszard CZARNECKI (ECR, PL) and called on the European Parliament to give discharge to the Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court for the financial year 2013.

It welcomed the fact that the Court of Auditors observed that **no significant weaknesses** had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Committee. The latter concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2013 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were **free from material error**.

Budgetary and financial management: Members observed that in 2013, the Committee had an approved budget of EUR 87 373 000, of which EUR 84 800 000 were commitment appropriations with an utilisation rate of 97 %. They regretted the **decrease of the utilisation rate in 2013** when compared to that of 98.2 % in 2012.

Actions of the Committee of the Regions: the report noted with satisfaction that the recommendations and requirements made by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control were recorded by the budget service of the Committee in a central database and that the progress of implementation was regularly monitored. It welcomed the fact that a committee, consisting of five members and an external expert, had been set up for internal audit purposes and that the Court of Auditors' and Parliament's recommendations were so far being taken into account.

Members made a series of observations on the daily management of the Committee and asked for:

- more information on the plans and budgetary consequences of measures taken regarding the Committee's **political activities**;
- an assessment of the advantages that the Committee had ascertained when implementing the **new budgetary system**;
- an individual assessment of the impact that the **savings made from the Cooperation Agreement** between the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Committee, and Parliament, which was eventually signed on 5 February 2014 and led to the transfer of a large number of Committee staff to the new European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS);
- information on the Committee's intention to **rationalise translation requests** and to standardise some types of documents;
- more information on the **common methodology** agreed with other institutions to calculate and compare translation costs and other indicators;
- reduction in the costs of staff **away days**;
- improvement in the rate of **unused interpretation services** and better planning meetings;

- improvement in **raising the Committee's profile** by stepping up the necessary information and communication policy;

- establishment of an **equality plan**, particularly with regard to management posts;

- clarifications on buildings policy ;

- inclusion in its annual activity reports, in compliance with the existing rules on confidentiality and data protection, the **results and consequences of closed OLAF cases**, where the institution or any of the individuals working for it were the subject of the investigation.