2013 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Justice

2014/2080(DEC) - 31/03/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ryszard CZARNECKI (ECR, PL) called on the European Parliament to give discharge to the Registrar of the Court of Justice in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court for the financial year 2013. Members welcomed the fact that the Court of Auditors 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. No significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Court of Justice.

Budgetary and financial management: Members observed that the Court of Justice had appropriations amounting to EUR 354 880 000 and that the implementation rate was **96.3 %.** They regretted the decrease of the utilisation rate in 2013 when compared to that of 98.6 % in 2012, this being due to the fact that the initial appropriations for 2013 had included a proposed adjustment to salaries and pensions, totalling almost EUR 6 000 000, whereas no adjustment was ultimately granted by the Council.

ECJ actions: Members noted that the Court completed 701 cases in 2013 (595 completed cases in 2012), had 699 new cases brought before it (632 in 2012), including 450 appeals and references for preliminary ruling. They endorsed the positive statistical results and found that despite the good outcome, there was **still margin for improvement**. They also considered that the Civil Service Tribunal needed to consolidate its human resources and believed that the elimination of the Civil Service Tribunal was an inadequate solution for dealing with the Council's long lasting blockage.

The committee made a **series of observations** on the Court’s daily management and asked for:

- improvement within the existing **resources** at the disposal of the Court of Justice;
- **reorganisation of the Court** in such a way as to make a clearer separation between legal and administrative functions;
- respect for **multilingualism** in the Court of Justice;
- a consolidation of the Registries of the Court of Justice into **one Registry** in order to ensure a better coordination of procedural actions between the Courts;
- a plan to encourage all the Member States to use the **e-Curia application**;
- a more efficient planning of the **hearings' calendar**;
- **outsourcing**, bearing in mind the very high unused appropriations - EUR 2 200 000 - allocated to freelance translation;
- implementing a system of **translation "on demand"** for specific cases and making more frequent use of technological based translation tools;

- strengthening cooperation with the other institutions in order to work out a uniform method of presenting translation costs ;

- a reduction in the **costs of away days** for staff ;

- the establishment of some objective criteria to define the **excessive delay in the period for delivering judgments**;

- a better **geographical balance** at all levels of administration ;

- the introduction of an **equal opportunities plan** specifically geared towards management posts;

- reduction in the number of **official cars** at the disposal of the Members and staff;

- more information on the reasons for the **high number of contracts** concluded under negotiated procedure;

- clarification on the ECJ's **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.