# 2013 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2014/2084(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 **European Ombudsman** in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2013.

They noted with satisfaction that in its 2013 annual report, the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect to the audited topics related to the human resources and the procurement for the European Ombudsman.

**Budgetary and financial management:** the report observed that the Ombudsman's budget amounted in 2013 to EUR 9 731 371 and that of the total appropriations, 98.20% were committed and 91.82% paid with a utilisation rate of **98.20%** (95.88% in 2012).

**Ombudsman's actions:** Members noted the continued improvements of the **financial planning** and its monitoring and endorsed the Ombudsman's Annual Management Plan for 2013 including a Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) scoreboard to measure the office's performance in achieving its objectives.

Furthermore, the committee welcomed the fact that the aim of **closing 70% of cases** in less than a year was surpassed in 2013. It noted, however, that the proportion of inquiries closed within 18 months was still below the 90% target set by the Ombudsman, even though it has increased from 79% to 81%. It expected that this target would be reached in 2014.

Members went on to make a **series of observations** on the Ombudsman's daily management and asked for:

- information on the unused rate of the **interpretation services**;
- strengthening cooperation with the other institutions to work out a uniform method of presenting **translation costs**;
- a reduction in the **high level of spending on 'away days'**, conferences and similar events for staff at the Ombudsman's office in 2013, which was noticeably higher than it was in the other institutions;
- clarification on the Ombudsman'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;
- the introduction of a **procedure** to assess the possible impact of certain publications in advance, with a view to publishing them, along with an explanatory report, so as to avoid them being used in a biased way.

Lastly, whilst welcoming the fact that a woman had been elected as European Ombudsman; is concerned, nevertheless, about the lack of women in management posts at the Ombudsman's office, Members called for the introduction of an equal opportunities plan specifically geared towards management posts.