2016 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Auditors

2017/2140(DEC) - 23/03/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ingeborg GRÄSSLE (EPP, DE) calling on the European Parliament to **give discharge** to the Secretary-General of the European Court of Auditors in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court for the financial year 2016, Section V – Court of Auditor.

Members took note of the opinion of the external auditor that the financial statements of the Court give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Court.

Budgetary and financial management: in 2016, the Court's final appropriations amounted to a total of EUR 137 557 000 (compared to EUR 132 906 000 in 2015) and that the **overall rate of implementation for the budget was 99%.**

Members welcomed the overall prudent and sound financial management of the Court in the 2016 budget period and expressed support for the successful paradigm shift towards performance-based budgeting in the Commission’s budget planning. They encouraged the Court to apply the method to its own budget-planning procedure.

The report noted that the Court **reformed** its chambers and committees in 2016 with significant impact on the preparation of its work. This reform is complementary to the introduction of a task-based organisation and the establishment of an institution-wide network to strengthen knowledge management;

The Court is asked to provide more detailed data on each institution in order to achieve a better view of the weaknesses in administrative expenditures. Members considered that country specific reporting by the Court for every Member State would be welcome in the future.

Court’s action: Members made a series of recommendations to the Court:

- respect the timeframe for producing special reports without compromising the quality of the reports;
- encourage the cooperation and exchange of practices between the Court and the Member States’ Supreme Audit Institutions;
- examine the long-term impact of staff cuts, in particular regarding the institution's ability to improve gender and geographical imbalances as well as the need for building on the capacity of experienced officials to take over management posts, when planning the future allocation of financial resources for personnel;
- continue promoting gender balance, in particular at managerial level, and report on the strategy and results of the action plan;
- better organise its internal translation services in order to generate economic savings;
- establish an independent disclosure, advice and referral body with sufficient budgetary resources, in order to help whistleblowers use the right channels to disclose information on possible irregularities affecting the financial interests of the Union, while protecting their confidentiality and offering needed support and advice;
- perform impact assessments and inform the Parliament on the implications of Brexit by the end of 2018.