2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2018/2174(DEC) - 27/02/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Arndt KOHN (S&D, DE) calling 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 2017.

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 Ombudsman. The Court concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2017 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

Budgetary and financial management

Members noted that the Ombudsman's budget is mostly administrative, with a large amount being used for expenditure related to persons, buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous running costs. This amounted in 2017 to EUR 10 905 441 (EUR 10 658 951 in 2016).

They welcomed the Ombudsman's commitment to ensure that all available funds are spent in a result-oriented manner.

Of the total appropriations, 93.91 % were committed (compared to 95.40 % in 2016) and 86.20 % paid (compared to 85.89 % in 2016), with an implementation rate of 93.9 % (compared to 95.40 % in 2016).

Members noted a decrease in the implementation rate in 2017 which is the result of underspending of the budget line for European Schools.

Complaints and inquiries

The report noted the increase of received complaints by 20 %, from 1 839 in 2016 to 2 216 in 2017. The Ombudsman opened a total of 433 inquiries on the basis of complaints (245 in 2016) and closed 348 such inquiries (291 in 2016).

In 2017, the overall number of new complaints dealt with was 2 181, of which 751 were within the mandate, compared to 1 880 complaints dealt with in 2016 of which 711 were within the mandate. Therefore, the number of complaints within the mandate has increased by 5.5%.

The average time for dealing with a complaint decreased from 86 in 2013 to 64 days and the average time for dealing with inquiries decreased from 369 days in 2013 to 266 days in 2017.