1997 discharge: vocational training ECDVT and Dublin Foundation EFILWC budgets

1998/2240(DEC) - 11/02/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: the discharge to be given to the Management Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in respect of the implementation of its statement of revenue for the financial year 1997. CONTENT: this Council document requests the European Parliament to agree to the discharge to be given to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (ECDVT) as well as to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC) for the financial year 1997. In recommending this discharge, the Council takes account of the conclusions of two reports by the Court of Auditors relating respectively to the ECDVT and the EFILWC: 1) report on the ECDVT: in this first report, the Court acknowledges that the ECDVT has made undeniable progress in terms of its internal management even if practices which were criticised in the previous report have not entirely disappeared. In terms of financial control, the Court would prefer to see a financial controller permanently available to the Centre but, at the same time, considers that the current situation does not seem to have harmed the Centre unduly and notes that it gained easy access to all the documents it required. With regard to the problem of the proportion of payments made through the imprest account, the Court states that this has fallen from 74% in 1996 to 60% in 1997. However, some of the payments made through this account concerned budget items for which the Management Board had not authorized that practice. The Court is also critical that, although they have fallen, transfers from one title to another still affected 5% of the Centre's initial budget in 1997, mainly as a result of rapid staff turnover. With regard to the current management of the ECDVT, the Court points out that the tendering and supplier selection procedures have not always been correctly applied. Furthermore, the Court draws attention once again to already often-mentioned problems related to management of the funding of the Centre's new premises. As last year, it notes that the Centre is inable to state who would bear the cost of renovating the temporary premises which it will be vacating and that the construction of permanent premises is behind schedule. It furthermore seems unlikely to the Court that the estimated cost of the new building will be adhered to. In response to these various comments, the Centre points out that many of the problems encountered were caused by its recent change of location and further states that the team responsible for financial and administrative management is now at full strength and fully operational. With regard to the construction of the new building, the Centre states that fitting out is in progress and will be completed in June 1999 and that it will be fully operational in its permanent headquarters on 01/09/99. 2) report on the EFILWC: in its report, the Court of Auditors reiterates its previous comments on the need to draw a clear distinction between the duties of the authorising officer and those of the accounting officer and requests the immediate introduction of the SINCOM 2 system, in order to guarantee this segregation of duties. As for the ECDVT, the Court reiterates its request that clear procedures be laid down regarding imprestaccounts. The Court also stresses that measures must be taken to achieve savings in the area of mission expenditure. Lastly, it considers that efforts should be made to avoid over-long time-lags between the payment of advances and the execution of studies. In conclusion, the Council calls on the Parliament to give a discharge to the ECDVT and to the EFILWC. In nonetheless calls on both institutions to take the necessary measures to put an end to the problems repeatedly criticized by the Court of Auditors (particularly, with regard to the EFILWC, in the area of mission expenditure).