European Commission, administrative reform: management of Community programmes, statute of executive agencies

2000/0337(CNS) - 25/10/2001 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

The Court of Auditors generally welcomes the draft regulation, but states that there are a number of provisions that require clarification or amendment, the main ones being: - it is not appropriate to specify that the headquarters of an executive agency can only be in one of the places where the Commission departments are located. - since the Commission remains liable for the agencies' execution of its powers, it is considered advisable to lay down general rules on the controls which the Commission operates in relation to the activities of the agencies, so that it may intervene if an agency acts in a way that is contrary to the objective of the Community programme in question. - the steering committee should adopt clear objectives for the agency, when the latter is first established. - there should be provision for the evaluation at regular intervals of the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. - charging the expenditure on operations managed by the agency directly to the general budget is welcome. However, it implies that the financial statements of an agency may not include expenditure on the operations which it is responsible for managing. This would not be in line with the Commission's attempts to introduce ABM/ABB for its programmes. It is important that an agency have an obligation to account in global terms for the operating appropriations it manages. - it is not appropriate for the Parliament to grant discharge to each executive agency in respect of their running costs only. As part of its general discharge of the Commission, the Parliament would examine the performance of the Commission and its agencies, rather than give separate discharge to each agency. - there should be an article providing that the Commission, as the delegating institution, is legally responsible for the acts of the executive agencies.