1999 discharge: EC general budget, Parliament

2000/2157(DEC) - 28/04/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: presentation of the revenue and expenditure account and the financial balance relating to the operations of the 1999 budget - (European Parliament) CONTENT: this document establishes the level of expenditures and the financial balance of the other European institutions (i.e. excluding the Commission), and, in particular, the European Parliament and the Ombudsman for the 1999 financial year. The document indicates that the appropriations in the Parliament's budget amounted to 927,050,439 euros (a very limited increase on the 1998 budget, excluding the SAB, of 1.8%), which were utilised at a rate of 98.97%. 813,716,797 euros of these appropriations were in fact paid up, thus a rate of 88.68%. The implementation of the 1999 budget was affected by the European elections, the resignation of the European Commission and the approval procedure of the new executive, as well as developments in the real estate sector. Additional appropriations were written into the budget with a view to the information campaign for the elections (5.5 million euros), but also to cover the expenditures arising from the renewal of more than half of the Members of Parliament (transitional allowances, secretarial expenses, etc). The election year coincided, moreover, with a reduction in parliamentary activities because fewer meetings took place during the run-up to the election and the gradual return to work following the constitution of the various committees and delegations. The resignation of the European Commission further accentuated this slowdown in activities. The hearings of the new commissioners postponed the other activities of the Parliament's committees. This situation resulted in important over-runs on the items directly or indirectly related to meetings: interpretation, publications in the Official Journal and in extenso proceedings. In the real estate sector, the Parliament's Bureau set the date of 15 December 1998 as the date of reception of the Louise Weiss building. The constitutive session of July 1999 took place in this new building. This move had entailed the surrendering of the IPE III and the Palais de l'Europe for which the 1999 did not provide rental appropriations. The acquisition of the Atrium Building in Brussels was made possible thanks to the supplementary and amending budget (SAB) the appropriations for which had been carried over from 1998 to 1999. This meant that the Montoyer building could be freed up for the use of the Commitee of the Regions. In order to make best use of the available appropriations and to avoid cancellations, three virements were made in addition to the remainder of the SAB and the P3 virement in favour of Article 206 'Acquisition of immovable property', resulting in an increase in the anticipatory payments to 175.4 million euros. Since 1993, these represent a total of 686 million euros and result in an annual reduction in the budget estimated at 85 million euros. The 1999 budget was the first one prepared and implemented in euros. The introduction of the single currency enabled a large part of the exchange risk to be eliminated but the variations in the EUR/currency of payment remain for the four 'out' currencies and have a bearing on the allowances for secretarial and generalexpenses. The traditional annex to the Parliament's budget regarding the implementation of the Ombudsman's budget should also be noted. From 2000, this budget will be separated from and independent of the Parliament's budget. In 1999, many of the Ombudsman's technical and administrative services were provided directly or indirectly by the Parliament to avoid duplication. The 1999 budget included for the first time a lump sum to cover the costs incurred by the Parliament for the provision of services solely concerning staff (management of contracts, salaries and allowances, and IT services). The appropriations for the Ombudsman in 1999 amounted to 3,474,797 euros committed at a rate of 85.5%.