1998 discharge: EC general budget, Parliament

1999/2051(DEC) - 29/04/1999

PURPOSE: presentation of the revenue and expenditure account and the financial statement relating to budget operations during the 1998 financial year (other sections). CONTENT: this document draws up the amount of expenditures and the financial statement for the Union's institutions (other than the Commission) for the 1998 financial year: - European Parliament (and the Ombudsman), - Council of Ministers, - Court of Justice, - Court of Auditors, - Economic and Social Committee, - Committee of the Regions. As far as the European Parliament is specifically concerned, the document indicates that the appropriations allocated to its budget (including the amending supplementary budget (ASB) 1/98) amounted to 1,060,936,503 euros (a rate of increase in the EP's budget between 1997 and 1998, excluding the ASB, of 2.7%), with commitments to the amount of 950,205,608 euros. Payments of up to the sum of 788,043,887 were in fact made. The document also underlines the fact that the implementation of the 1998 budget was affected by changes in the real estate sector: the occupancy of building D3 and the surrender of other buildings, delay in the availability of the IPE IV (the date of the handing over of the building was 15.12.1998 instead of October 1997). This situation gave rise to the partial use of appropriations for the rental and occupancy of new buildings. It also involved the cancelling of appropriations and the re-commitment of 1998 appropriations (for the installation of the premises in Strasbourg). This financial year was also affected by: - the adoption of an ASB of 150 million euros for the purchase of real estate, - the entry of 52 million euros in the reserve, - an ECU/BF conversion rate higher than that used in drawing up the budget (40.0786 instead of 40.6690). As far as the other institutions are concerned, the following should be noted: 1) As far as the Council is concerned, the efforts undertaken by this institution regarding recruitment in the context of the Union's enlargement, the need for unplanned installations, the conversion of meeting rooms, as well as the unplanned hosting in the Justus Lipsius building of the ECOFIN and General Affairs Council on 1 and 3 May 1998. The appropriations to the Council for 1998 were 320,272,000 euros. 99.03% of them were used; 2) as far as the Court of Justice is concerned, the expenditures were linked to the introduction of inter-institutional cooperation and the modernisation of equipment in the document printshop with a view to paper-saving. It should also be noted that, like last year, the slight appreciation in the value of the ECU in comparison with the Luxembourg franc required the revalorisation of the institutions' budget enabling new budgetary allocations to be allocated to translation and computing. 3) as far as the Court of Auditors is concerned, the filling of 23 additional posts granted by the budgetary authority under ASB 1/97 and 25 others granted under the 1998 budget wasnot fully achieved given the standard abatement of 3%. The Court had, therefore, to leave 15-18 posts open until the 1999 financial year. 4) as far as the ESC and COR are concerned, there was a reorganisation of the internal structure of these 2 institutions following the renewal of the mandate of their respective members. In particular, it should be noted that a new report on the management of these institutions was presented following Parliament's criticisms regarding the poor quality of the management report for the 1996 financial year. Furthermore, an administrative agreement was signed between these two institutions and the European Parliament with a view to them assuming the rental and security costs of the Belliard I and II buildings for the period 15.10.1998 to 31.03.1999 in the context of the expenses of the common organisational structure.