1998 discharge: EC general budget, other sections

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PURPOSE: presentation of the revenue and expenditure account and the balance sheets with respect to budgetary operations in 1998 (other sections). CONTENT: this document draws up the amount of expenditures and the balance sheet of the other Union institutions (other than the Commission) for the 1998 financial year, as follows: - the European Parliament (and Ombudsman); - the Council; - the Court of Justice; - the Court of Auditors; - the Economic and Social Committee; - the Committee of the Regions. As far as the European Parliament is concerned, the document indicates that the appropriations shown in the budget of this institution (including the supplementary and amending budget -SAB- 1/98) amounted to 1.060.936.503 euros (a rate of increase in the EP's budget between 1997 and 1998, excluding the SAB, of 2.7%), committed to the amount of 950,205,608 euros. These appropriations were effectively paid to the amount of 788,043,887 euros. The document also shows that the implementation of the 1998 budget was affected by developments that took place in the real estate sector: the occupancy of the D3 building and the vacating of the other buildings, the delay in the availability of the IPE IV (the date of the handing over of the building to the EP's Bureau was 15.12.1998 instead of October 1997). This situation is at the origin of the partial use of the appropriations allocated for the rental and occupancy of the new buildings. It also involved the cancellation of appropriations and made recommitment necessary on the 1998 appropriations (for the fitting out of offices in Strasbourg). This financial year was also influenced by: - the adoption of an SAB of 150 million euros for the acquisition of real estate; - the entry in the reserve of the sum of 52 million euros; - an ECU/BEF conversion rate higher than the rate used in the drawing up of the budget (40.0786 instead of 40.6690). As far as the other institutions are concerned, it should be noted that: 1) with respect to the Council, the efforts made by this institution to recruit in the context of the Union's enlargement, the need for unplanned fitting work, the conversion of meeting rooms, as well as the unplanned hosting in the Justus Lipsius building of meetings on 1-3 May 1998. The Council's appropriations for 1998 amounted to 320,272,000 euros. 99.03% of them were used; 2) with respect to the Court of Justice, expenditures relating to the implementation of inter-institutional cooperation and the modernisation of equipment in the copy shop with a view to a more rational use of paper. It should also be noted that like last year the slight appreciation in the ECU in comparison with the Luxembourg franc, has resulted in the revalorisation of the budget of the institutions permitting new budgetary means to be allocated to translation and information technology. The appropriations for this institution for 1998 amounted to 120,135,700 euros. 99.03% of them were used; 3) with respect to the Court of Auditors, the request for 23 additional posts granted by the budgetary authority under the SAB 1/97 and the 25 others granted in the 1998 budget was not wholly utilised in view of the application of a standard abatement of 3%. The Court therefore had to leave between 15 and 18 posts vacant for the 1999 financial year; 4) with respect to the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, there was a reorganisation of the internal structure of these institutions following the renewal of the mandate of their respective members. In particular, it should be noted that a new management report regarding these institutions was presented following criticisms of the European Parliament on the shortcomings of the report presented at the end of the 1996 financial year. Furthermore, it should be noted that the signature of an administrative agreement between these two organisations and the European Parliament with a view to the taking charge of 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 expenditures of the common organisational structure.