2001 discharge: EC general budget, Court of Justice

2002/2104(DEC) - 08/04/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Parliament adopted the report by María Antonia AVILES PEREA (EPP-ED, Spain) and grants discharge to the Registrar of the Court of Justice in respect of the implementation of the budget for the 2001 financial year. With regard to the Court's current building projects involving the renovation of the "Palais", a ring-shaped building around the "Palais" and two towers containing offices, Parliament asks the Court to provide a report on the way in which it manages its existing buildings, new building projects, maintenance and infrastructures generally. It notes that in 2001 the Court of Justice made an advance payment of EUR 2 884 849 to the Luxembourg authorities in respect of the lease/purchase of the annexes to the "Palais" with the aim of reducing the amount payable under the 2003 budget. It notes the Court's assessment that, with a number of pre-enlargement staff commencing already in late 2003 and the accession date set for 1 May 2004, additional office space will be required in order to accommodate the new Members of the Institution (up to 10 judges each for the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance), the staff of their respective chambers ("cabinets"), the staff of the translation service and many other accession-related staff. It further notes that the administration of the Court, with the help of the Luxembourg Ministry of Public Works, is currently undertaking a search for suitable office accommodation. The House notes, as regards the workload of the Court of First Instance, that while the number of cases disposed of has increased in recent years, it has invariably remained lower than the number of cases brought, so that the backlog of pending cases has continued to grow (2001 - cases brought: 345; cases disposed of: 275; cases pending: 589). Parliament asks that the discharge authority be kept informed of the evolution of the Court's workload and translation backlog. Parliament notes with concern that the European Union's reputation, as well as the rights of EU citizens, suffer owing to the length of time it takes the Court of Justice to deal with its current case load. Therefore, it requests the Court to provide Parliament with a report explaining how it currently organises its work, and to detail the problems which preclude the Court from giving an efficient service. It equally notes that enlargement will increase the severity of the problems faced by the Court. The Court is also asked to provide suggestions on how to address these problems, indicating where structural changes are necessary, and giving a full breakdown of the additional resources that would be necessary to carry out these improvements. Parliament expects the Members of the Institutions to repay the costs incurred if they use the official cars with which they are provided for non-official purposes. It asks the Court of Justice to forward to Parliament by 30 June 2003 a report on the rules it has issued in this respect and on the amounts paid by Members in 2001 and 2002.