2001 discharge: EC general budget, Court of Auditors

2002/2105(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 Secretary-General of the Court of Auditors in respect of the implementation of the budget for the 2001 financial year. The Parliament commends the promptness of the Court of Auditors in making its public presentation of its 2001 annual report. It requests however that that in future chapter 7 of the annual report (administrative expenditure) be extended so as to give the reader an overall picture of the situation within the various Institutions in this sector; repeats its request to the Court for a separate statement of assurance for each Institution or, failing that, a separate certificate or assessment of regularity /conformity for each Institution, possibly reflecting the annual activity reports of the authorising officers by delegation. Parliament welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Court of Auditors to make the Statement of Assurance (DAS) an instrument with measurable indicators allowing an assessment to be carried out of progress in financial control and management over time; considers nevertheless that the DAS should allow a distinction to be made between, on the one hand, management aspects where improvements have been noted and, on the other, those for which action plans should be established to rectify shortcomings; expects the reformed DAS methodology to be effective for the 2003 discharge exercise. The Court of Auditors is called upon to adapt the DAS so as to make it an instrument enabling the discharge and budgetary authorities to compare and monitor progress in financial management and control over time, preferably in a quantified manner. Parliament also calls on the Court of Auditors, the Commission and the Member States to develop and introduce a single audit model in order to further improve and rationalise audit and reporting activities. Concerning the staffing policy, the Parliament is pleased that, despite awarding six ad personam promotions, the Court of Auditors has decided to limit them to very exceptional and particularly deserving cases; rejects, however, the principle of ad personam promotions. It notes the difficulties experienced by the Court of Auditors in recruiting and retaining professionally qualified staff and the estimate by the Court's Secretary-General that it will require (in addition to the posts within each of the 10 new "cabinets") 60 additional auditors, 22 additional administrative staff as well as linguistic staff. Parliament also notes with concern that during 2002 a total of 17 officials amongst its audit staff left the Court, in part because of insufficient promotion possibilities. Parliament reiterates its for publication of the declarations of the financial interests of Members of the Court of Auditors and it expects the Members of the Institutions to repay the costs incurred if they use the official cars with which they have been provided for non-official purposes. It asks the Court of Auditors 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.