2001 discharge: European Environment Agency

2003/2044(DEC) - 06/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Freddy BLAK (EUL/NGL, Denmark) giving discharge to the European Environment Agency, in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2001. (Please see the document dated 20/10/03.) Whilst the Parliament welcomed the reduction of the amount the Agency carries over, it notes the Agency's statement that, in implementing grant agreements concerning multiannual projects, a certain level of automatic carry-over 'is difficult to avoid'. This problem is 'systemic' in nature as it mainly concerns the relationship with the European Topic Centres which are under contract with the Agency. As projects carried out by such centres account for almost half of the Agency's operational budget, it should intensify its efforts to ensure that these centres operate within a time frame that reflects the 'annuality principle' of the budget. Such efforts would result in a reduction in carryovers. There is scope for developing a harmonised approach between agencies when dealing with 'systematic' problems. The Agency should intensify its contacts with other agencies faced with similar problems in their contractual relations with such centres or national points in order for a 'best practice approach' to be developed and applied. As a general point with regard to the Agencies, the Parliament expressed its concern that the Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) does not carry out any checks on the Agencies. This implies that Articles 71 and 72 of Regulation 2343/2002/EC are not being adhered to and that, in practice, an outside control of the quality of management and control systems of the agencies is left to be carried out in the context of the Court of Auditors control. Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that the necessary resources are made available so that the IAS is in a position to fulfill its tasks with regard to the internal control systems in the Agencies. Finally, it asked the Commission to submit a proposal for an amendment to the constituent acts of the Agencies to ensure that their directors may in future be appointed only with the assent of Parliament.