2003 discharge: Convention on the future of the European Union

2004/2177(AVC) - 13/05/2004 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE : to present the Report for the Court of Auditors on the accounts drawn up by the Secretary-General of the Convention on the future of the European Union for the financial year ended 31 December 2003.

CONTENT : this audit report concerns the Fund for the financing of the Convention on the future of the European Union, set up by Decision 2002/176/EU of 21 February 2002 of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council. By a further Decision 2002/997/EU of 20 December 2002, the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States amended Decision 2002 /176/EU, extending its validity from 1 January 2003 until the end of the Convention's proceedings, or until 31 December 2003 at the latest.

The Court has examined the financial statements in respect of the management of the Fund for the financial year ended 31 December 2003. In accordance with Article 13(1) of Decision 2002/176/EU, the budget was implemented under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the Convention. This responsibility included drawing up and presenting the financial statements.

The Court carried out its audit in accordance with its auditing policies and standards. These have been adapted from generally accepted international auditing standards to reflect the Community nature of the context within which the Court works.

The Court's examination enabled it to obtain reasonable assurance that the accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2003 are reliable, and that the underlying transactions are, on the whole, legal and regular.

A summary of the total revenue and expenditure of the Convention, drawn up by the Court on the basis of the financial statements of the two years of activity, is presented as follows :

- as regards revenue : contributions from the signatory institutions 4 000 000; Bank interest received 88 524; total revenue 4 088 524.

- expenditure paid and accrued : Title I-Members and staff of the Convention 1 084 777;

Title II-Translations and publications 2 883 372; total expenditure 3 968 149.

At the end of 2003 certain costs relating to translation and publication were still outstanding. Considering that 31 December 2003 was the deadline for closing down the Fund, an amount of 655 368 euro, resulting from an estimation of the costs to be settled after this date, was transferred to the General Secretariat of the Council, which undertook the obligation to settle these costs. The final outturn of the Convention's accounts will only be known when all outstanding liabilities have been settled. This might result in a modification of the 120 375 euro foreseen to be paid back to the general budget and divided among the participating institutions. The Court will follow up this question when auditing the Council accounts for the 2004 financial year.

It should be noted that the Secretary-General of the Convention had no comments to make on the Court's observations.