2003 discharge: EC general budget, Economic and social Committee ESC

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PURPOSE : to present the revenue and expenditure account and the balance sheet concerning the activities of the budget for the financial year 2003 (Economic and Social Committee).

CONTENT : this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the balance sheet for the other institutions of the Union (except the Commission) for the financial year 2003, in particular, the Economic and Social Committee.

The ESC’s 2003 budget amounted to EUR 81 million with 98.1% being committed. The implementation of the budget was marked by the following elements:

- implementation of 4 priority policies : to optimise the role of the consultative body of the Committee within the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission; to improve the representativeness of the ESC as a representative of the civil society; strengthen the presence of the ESC in the debate on the future of Europe; develop the internal structures of the Committee;

- aiming to improve the ESC’s services, to reinforce its working methods and its cooperation with other institutions, to cooperate with the Committee of the Regions;

- on an operational level : 2003 was marked by the continuation of the work of the Committee which delivered 190 opinions (against 172 in 2002). Other salient issues can be summarized as follows: the development of interinstitutional cooperation, notably with the EP; the participation in the debate on the future of Europe; the preparation of enlargement; the strengthening of its communication, services offered to the Members and the modernization of its internal workings (in particular, in respect of the requirement of the new Financial Regulation).

The Committee highlighted that following the demands of the budgetary authority an amount of EUR 2 million was released in 2003 with a view to paying the ground rent for the "Belliard 97" building. The ESC stated that it concluded a new rent contract with the Committee of the Regions for the "Belliard 68" building to be taken account of in 2004.

Lastly, the Committee equally improved its accounting system and updated its inventory of its assets as was requested by the Court of Auditors.