2003 discharge: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

2004/2059(DEC) - 12/04/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Inés AYALA SENDER (PES, ES) and Carl SCHLYTER (Greens/EFA, SE) by 556 votes for, 55 against and 26 abstentions giving discharge to the Director of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia for the 2003 financial year.

Parliament welcomes the Centre's results in reducing carry-overs of operating appropriations; invites the Centre to continue its efforts further to reduce carry-overs. It expects the Centre to indicate which among its activities could be financed by differentiated appropriations thus allowing for a further reduction in carry-overs. In line with the ECA's observation, the Centre is expected to correctly present in its general budget any Community subsidies it received and managed in relation to external programmes (Phare subsidies) as well as other sources of income in order to present a truly general budget.

It equally welcomes the solution given to the general request to make public the 2003 report on racism, and encourages the Centre to improve the preparatory works for this kind of report for the future. The absence of an equality plan is regretted and the Parliament expects the Agency to develop a plan shortly in order to become an equal opportunities employer; expects the Agency not only to consider equality issues at the stage of recruitment but also to work proactively and on a long-term basis to promote gender equality. Parliament welcomes the plan for a diversity audit and welcomes the fact that the Centre has integrated staff from minorities at all levels.

In its accompanying comments, the committee made a number of general points addressed to the Commission, the Agencies and the Court of Auditors (ECA):

General points addressed to the Commission and the Agencies: Parliament notes the Commission's position with regard to delegating responsibility for the execution of tasks to bodies, including agencies, other than the Commission's core administration and it takes the view that this does not answer Parliament's call for in-depth consideration at inter-institutional level of the structure of existing agencies. It therefore invites the Commission to provide clarification on this point and on the future overall inter-institutional agreement related to the new arrangements to be set up within or in parallel with the Financial Perspective and invites the Commission to organise and perform in the medium term, e.g. on a standard three-year cycle, a cross-cutting analysis of the evaluations carried out on individual Agencies in order to:

- reach conclusions with regard to the coherence of Agency activity with EU policies in general and as regards the synergies existing or to be developed between the agencies and Commission departments and the avoidance of overlapping between them;

- make an assessment of the broader European added value of the Agencies' outputs in their respective area of activity and of the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency model in implementing or contributing to EU policies;

- determine and enhance the impact of the Agencies" actions in terms of the proximity, accessibility and visibility of the EU to its citizens.

In addition, Parliament calls on the Commission, in parallel with this exercise, to present by the end of 2005 at the latest, proposals for changes to be made in the existing Agencies" Constituent Acts with a view, inter alia, to optimising its relationship with the Agencies.

General points addressed to the Agencies: Parliament expects to receive from now on, from each of the Agencies, the report summarising information on the audits carried out by the Internal Auditor. It invites the Agencies to make further efforts to apply correctly the staff regulations and rules applicable to other civil servants with regard to their staff (recruitment procedures and relevant decisions taken, personal files, calculation of remuneration and other entitlements, promotions policy, percentage of vacant posts, quotas for respecting gender equality, etc.). Moreover, the Parliament expects the Agencies, in response to the relevant observations of the ECA, to comply fully with the budgetary principles as set out in the Financial Regulation, in particular those of unity and budgetary accuracy.

Parliament invites the Agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy of communication addressing the need to make available, in the appropriate form, the results of their work to the general public beyond the presentation of such results to the Institutions, Member States" competent services, specialists, partners or specific beneficiaries.

General points addressed to the ECA and the Agencies: Parliament welcomes the ECA's initiative to add a table to its specific reports on the Agencies presenting summary information on the competences, governance, resources available and products/output of the particular agency.