2004 discharge: EC general budget, Committee of the Regions

2005/2096(DEC) - 21/03/2006

The committee adopted the report by Nils LUNDGREN (IND/DEM, SE) proposing that discharge be granted to the Committee of the Regions (CoR) for 2004. In its accompanying comments, the committee noted that, in the Court of Auditors' Annual Report, the CoR appeared to be "the institution with the highest number of criticisms of all the other institutions". It deplored the fact that the internal audit function was carried out by a member of temporary staff on short-term renewable contracts, and said that the CoR should have focused on setting up a fully functioning internal audit service in 2004, knowing the challenges resulting from enlargement. However, it welcomed the solution now found. MEPs also found it regrettable that the Court of Auditors was unable to take account of the CoR's annual activity report, as this had not been produced before the Court's audit was concluded.

On the CoR's buildings policy, the committee concluded that renting buildings would significantly reduce the risks involved for small institutions and that "this solution should be considered as a serious alternative for future building projects".

Lastly, the report noted that during 2004 the CoR had amended its rules on the refunding of travel expenses and the payment of travel and meeting allowances for its Members. However, given the lack of follow-up in 2004 to the OLAF report on fraud and irregularities at the CoR, MEPs demanded that the CoR abolish the imprest account system for the reimbursement of Members' travel expenses and adopt the same system as the European Economic and Social Committee.