2004 discharge: EC general budget, Court of Justice

2005/2093(DEC) - 21/03/2006

The committee adopted the report by Nils LUNDGREN (IND/DEM, SE) recommending that the European Court of Justice (ECJ) be granted discharge for the 2004 budget. In its accompanying comments, the committee "notes with disapproval that in 2004 the ECJ again failed to implement several internal control standards". It agreed with the Court of Auditors that the ECJ internal auditor's function as head of the "verification unit" performing ex-ante controls on the authorising officer's operations was not compatible with the tasks of an independent internal auditor. MEPs also called on the ECJ to draw up in future years, like most of the other institutions, a declaration of assurance signed by its authorising officer by delegation. They added that this matter should be regulated in the current revision of the Financial Regulation.

On a more positive note, the committee congratulated the ECJ on the design, content and legibility of its activity report, and recommended that all institutions should follow its example. Among other points, the report said that, although the reduction in the average duration of cases was to be welcomed, 20 months per case was still too long, and it urged the Court to reduce the duration of cases even further. Lastly, MEPs called for greater transparency concerning the financial interests of ECJ judges and recommended that the Court draw up binding rules on this subject.