

# 2004 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2005/2091(DEC) - 21/03/2006

The committee adopted the report by Markus FERBER (EPP-ED, DE) granting discharge for the implementation of the European Parliament's budget for 2004. It began by pointing out that 2004 was a "special year" in many respects because of a number of almost simultaneous events which had had a direct impact on Parliament's financial management: the accession of ten new Member States, Parliament's elections, the new Staff Regulations, continuing implementation of the new Financial Regulation and the implementation of the EP's in-house reform efforts ('Raising the Game').

On property policy, the report said that capital repayments on buildings should be agreed as part of the budgetary strategy and entered in a separate budget line from 2007 onwards. It also welcomed the initiative of a number of MEPs to begin discussions with the Commission on the possibility of establishing a European Institute of Technology at Parliament's seat in Strasbourg.

Referring to the Court of Auditors' findings that there were still weaknesses in supervisory and control systems, the committee said that these were a matter "of the utmost priority". The report also called on the Secretary-General to draw up, "as long since promised", a brief, accessible and attractive annual document to provide the public with more information on budgetary management in Parliament.

MEPs stressed that Parliament granted discharge not to the Secretary-General but to the President, and called for the latter to "make himself available to the Committee on Budgetary Control, during the discharge procedure, for a dialogue".

The report also highlighted the difficulties involved with public procurement procedures, the continuing need across the board for staff "with appropriate specialist knowledge" in the area of financial management and financial control, and the importance of multilingualism, which "gives expression to the Union's cultural and linguistic diversity", ensures equal treatment for its citizens and makes it possible for them to exercise their right to democratic control. Lastly, the report referred to the 2003 regulation on the rules regarding the funding of European political parties and recommended that it should be possible for 15% of committed funding to be carried forward to the following financial year, for European political parties to be allowed to establish a reserve from their own resources and for a multiannual financial framework to be established, extending for example over a parliamentary term.