

# 2004 discharge: EC general budget, Court of Auditors

2005/2094(DEC) - 27/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Nils **LUNDGREN** (IND/DEM, SE) and granted the Secretary-General of the Court of Auditors discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2004. In its accompanying statement, Parliament noted that in 2004 the European Court of Auditors (ECA) administered a budget of EUR 96 925 410, with a utilisation rate of 81.5 %.

Parliament approved the holding at regular intervals of calls for tender for the appointment of an external firm to audit the ECA's accounts, while expressing concern at the dominant position occupied by a small number of large accountancy practices in Luxembourg and elsewhere. It called for a tender procedure for the appointment of external auditors that is transparent, fair and intelligible to Parliament.

The report noted the ECA's expansion to 25 Members following enlargement and queried the effectiveness of such a structure. Parliament suggested that a review of the ECA's working methods could include as one of the possible options the proposal by the House of Lords to replace the current structure by "a highly qualified chief executive supported by a strong auditing staff, and reporting to a part-time, non-executive board of representatives from each of the Member States".

Parliament went on to invite the ECA to consider publishing Members' declarations of financial interests on its website, thereby contributing to the greater transparency of the institutions.

Finally, it recalled that, following an investigation by OLAF, legal proceedings against a former Member of the ECA have been pending before the courts of Luxembourg for some considerable time. It regretted that all too often final case reports forwarded by OLAF to the Member States' authorities are simply filed without further action. Parliament felt that judicial delay was not an acceptable response to a potentially embarrassing dossier, and stated that it would follow attentively the Luxembourg judicial authorities' hearing of the above case.