2004 Discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2005/2042(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 European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2004. In its accompanying statements, Parliament noted that in 2004 the European Ombudsman administered a budget of EUR 5 782 988 with a utilisation rate of 88. 05 %. It noted also that 2004 was the first year in which the Ombudsman's office experienced full autonomy and therefore had full responsibility in financial matters. The Ombudsman asked for and received authorisation from the budgetary authority to increase in the year 2004 the number of administrative staff dealing with financial and administrative matters. These new members of staff enabled the Ombudsman's office to perform during 2004 all the financial tasks that, until the end of 2003, had been provided by Parliament's services under the co-operation agreements. These tasks included, *inter alia* , the management, calculation and processing of missions and the preparation of payment orders concerning staff salaries and also the Ombudsman's emoluments.

The internal auditor's appraisal of the Ombudsman's office in relation to budgetary transactions in 2004 did not identify any areas of significant risk, but a series of action plans was agreed with the management to reduce risk further and to enhance the existing systems, especially in the area of public procurement.

Parliament went on to note that 2004 saw an unprecedented rise of 51 % in complaints to the Ombudsman, the total in 2004 being 3688 such complaints, which represented a clear sign of increasing awareness of the service provided by the Ombudsman and the greater degree of information provided by the institutions. Half of that increase was accounted for by complaints from the ten new Member States.

Parliament believed that the Ombudsman could serve as a model for other institutions, both as regards a clearly defined scope of competence and a well administered budget.