2004 discharge: European Aviation Safety Agency

2005/2118(DEC) - 27/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Umberto **GUIDONI** (GUE/NGL, IT) and granted discharge to the Executive Director of the European Aviation Safety Agency for the implementation of the Agency’s budget for the financial year 2004. The resolution was adopted by 520 votes in favour to 44 against with 14 abstentions.

In its accompanying comments, Parliament was concerned by the anomalies noted by the Court of Auditors in budgetary management, including a lack of any indication in the amending budgets about transfers carried out or about the reasons for these transfers and a failure to inform the Management Board about transfers and payment of advances outside the budget. It welcomed the steps taken by the Agency to improve budgetary management.

It also noted that staff selection procedures at the Agency had varied from one round of selections to another and urged the Commission and the Agency to agree on a transparent and coherent recruitment procedure consistent with the Agency's needs in terms of specifically qualified personnel. Parliament was pleased to note the Agency's assurance that recruitment procedures will be formalised by the drawing up of manuals of procedure in order to improve the transparency of decisions taken in this regard and to avoid apparently arbitrary variations in staff selection procedures, as stressed by the Court of Auditors.

Parliament remarked that over 70 % of the Commission's subsidy to the Agency was implemented under titles I and II, which concern personnel and administrative expenses only, and that, in operational expenditure, the Agency spent only about 10 % of the Commission's subsidy. The increase from 2003 to 2004 in expenditure on personnel and administration was much greater than the increase in operational expenditure.

Parliament also made a series of general remarks on the agencies. As well as spending money properly, agencies should also strive to spend money as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Court of Auditors was asked to consider the possibility of extending its specific annual reports on the agencies to include an examination of performance and achievement of objectives. The following aspects should be taken into account: duplication of work among the agencies must be avoided as much as possible and measures designed to improve transparency and communication with the public must be clarified, along with Community affirmative action measures at all levels of recruitment, training and the assignment of responsibilities.

Parliament noted that Community agencies did not always have a good image or good press and that many of them did not deserve such a negative image. EU citizens should be made aware of this, and Parliament called on the Commission to act accordingly, using whatever means it considers necessary.

Furthermore, the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 had affected the structures and operating arrangements of the Community agencies in many ways, and several of the agencies draw attention to these effects in their activity reports, focusing in particular on the increase in the number of administrators. The Commission needed to assess the problems encountered and recommend the regulatory changes required.

The Commission had made a commitment to harmonising the way in which activity reports concerning its directorates-general were presented. Parliament called for a similar approach to be taken in respect of the

activity reports of the Communities" agencies, which differed significantly in terms of content. The Commission should point out to the agencies the information and activity indicators that they must provide.

Finally, Parliament asked the Commission to improve synergies between agencies by making cooperation more effective, avoiding duplication of work and addressing shortcomings, in particular as regards common areas such as training, the implementation of Community policies across the board, the use of the latest management systems and solving problems relating to sound management of the budget.