2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 27/03/2007

The committee adopted the report by Daniel CASPARY (EPP-ED, DE) granting discharge to the European Ombudsman for 2005. In its accompanying resolution, the committee noted that the Ombudsman's annual caseload had increased from roughly 800 in 1996 to nearly 4000 in 2005, with a particularly sharp rise (53%) between 2003 and 2004. It also noted that there had been a 65% increase in the Ombudsman's budgetary allocations in 2005, and a 65% increase in staff in 2004 and 2005.

The committee stressed the importance of the information campaign carried out by the Ombudsman in 2005 through visits to the Member States in order to raise his profile among key members of the judiciary and enrich his collaboration with his national counterparts. MEPs said that, in order to identify target countries in which the Ombudsman's profile needed to be raised, the Ombudsman should rely on surveys on the awareness of citizens about his work rather than the number of complaints received from a particular country.

Lastly, the report said that, although the 1994 Ombudsman's Statute did not impose any obligation on the Ombudsman to publish his financial and economic interests, the Statute did place him "on a footing comparable with that of a Judge of the Court of Justice" and the Court (at Parliament's suggestion) had set up a working group to "examine the most appropriate way of ensuring transparency with regard to the judges' financial interests". The committee therefore called on the Ombudsman, pending the outcome of the inquiry, to follow the example set by the European Data Protection Supervisor and to publish a declaration of financial interests.