2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

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PURPOSE: presentation of the final annual accounts of the European Community for the financial year 2005 – Other institutions : Section VIII (A) - European Ombudsman.

CONTENT: this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the financial statement of the European Ombudsman for 2005 and presents an analysis of its financial management. The available appropriations set out in the Ombudsman's 2005 budget amounted to **EUR 7.72 million**, with an 89.75% utilisation rate.

Main axes of 2004 expenditure: the implementation report states that the activities carried out by this institution can be characterised by 4 main issues :

- **Ombudsman's workload following enlargement**: with the arrival of 10 new Member States, the number of complaints increased from 3688 in 2004 to 3920 in 2005;
- **Towards a new cooperation agreement with the EP** to reinforce interinstitutional cooperation (this agreement should enter into force in 2006);
- **A new "Finance" department**: the Ombudsman's Administration and Finance Department was overhauled in 2005, with its division into four sectors — the Administration Sector, the Finance Sector, the Complaints-Handling Sector and the Communications Sector. The aim of this restructuring was to allow for greater specialisation within the individual sectors, with co-ordination ensured by the Head of the Department. Within the Legal Department, procedures for case-management and quality control were strengthened, to ensure consistent monitoring and reliable handling of larger numbers of complaints by a larger team of Legal Officers;
- **Tenth anniversary**: various events were organised with the EU institutions and bodies during the anniversary year.

Amendments to the 2004 budget: throughout 2004, the Ombudsman made amendments to the budget through 4 transfers between items and chapters:

- costs relating to the implementation of the Ombudsman's Work Programme (notably increasing its profile in the new Member States);
- costs relating to the reform of the Staff Regulations;
- mop up transfer;
- establishing a reserve of translators.

The main issues of the 2005 budget implementation can be summarised as follows:

Title I (Staff costs) : the budget implementation was marked by:

- the cut in mission and travel costs, a 60% rate of utilisation;
- costs relating to the organisation of training courses and the exchange of personnel were reduced;
- interinstitutional cooperation costs were increased following a budget transfer to cover translation costs.

Title II (Operational expenditure): this heading showed an increase in appropriations for office equipment and the hiring of an official car for the Ombudsman. On the other hand, an under-utilisation of item "meetings in general" was noted.

Title III (Specific mission costs): only EUR 2139 were committed from the EUR 3000 available to cover costs relating to relations with the Ombudsman's international organisations.

For further details concerning the Committee's expenditure in 2005, please refer to the annexed detailed analysis of expenditure.