

# 2005 discharge: EC general budget, Economic and social Committee ESC

2006/2075(DEC) - 24/04/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted Daniel **CASPARY** (EPP-ED, D), by 580 votes for, 50 against and 23 abstentions, and granted the European Economic and Social Committee's Secretary-General discharge for the implementation of the European Economic and Social Committee budget for the financial year 2005. In doing so, Parliament made a series of observations on the discharge in its accompanying resolution.

It began by noting that, in 2005 the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) had available commitment appropriations amounting to a total of EUR 106 880 105,67 with a utilisation rate of 94,99 %. Following the introduction of accrual accounting with effect from 1 January 2005 the EESC's financial statements disclose a negative economic out-turn of EUR 3 811 889,47 (deficit) and identical amounts (EUR 168 387 721,19) in respect of both assets and liabilities.

With regard to administrative cooperation, Parliament noted that, notwithstanding the setting-up of a unit responsible for coordinating financial and contractual activities throughout the joint services of the EESC and the Committee of the Regions (CoR), some weaknesses still appeared concerning the operational management of certain procurement and coordination procedures between the new unit and the operating units which had not been clearly defined. The EESC and the CoR are currently considering whether they should continue to manage certain activities in common through the joint services, and, if so, what form that collaboration should in future take. Parliament felt that the administrative cooperation between the CoR and the EESC should be beneficial to both committees and financially advantageous for European taxpayers. Any new structures of administrative cooperation between the two committees must result in financial benefits. It demanded that both committees find a way to continue the administrative cooperation already in place. Having regard to the substantial divergences between the findings of the reports of the joint services and the CoR's two external experts, Parliament invited the CoR and the EESC to conduct a joint analysis based on appropriate benchmarks – if necessary with the help of the Court of Auditors – of the precise costs, benefits and savings generated by cooperation and to submit the results of their examination to the competent committee by 31 October 2007.

On the matter of buildings, Parliament recalled that, in 2005, the EESC began discussions with the Commission about taking over the office space in the van Maerlant building, and that following this event, the two Institutions do not expect to need further buildings in the coming years.

On the matter of travel expenses, Parliament noted that consideration is being given to establishing a clearer procedure for refunding travel expenses and paying travel and subsistence allowances, particularly in situations which are not explicitly envisaged by the rules.

Lastly, it observed that, further to the Belgian criminal proceedings against a former EESC Member concerning travel expenses, the EESC has brought a civil action for damages and that the Belgian Court is expected to give its judgment towards the middle of 2007.