2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 24/04/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted Daniel **CASPARY** (EPP-ED, D) and granted the European Ombudsman discharge for implementation of the budget for the financial year 2005. In doing so, it made a series of observations on the discharge in its accompanying resolution.

Parliament noted that in 2005 the European Ombudsman had available commitment appropriations amounting to a total of EUR 7 224 554 (2004: EUR 5 782 968) with a utilisation rate of 84,27%. The Ombudsman's 2005 financial statements disclose a negative economic out-turn for the year (EUR 98 482) and identical totals of assets and liabilities (EUR 890 853). The Court of Auditors in its Annual Report on the 2005 financial year indicated that the audit did not give rise to any observations as regards the Ombudsman. However, self assessment indicated that improvements in effectiveness were needed in some areas (risk assessment, sensitive functions, multi-annual programming).

Parliament recorded that the Ombudsman's annual caseload had increased from roughly 800 in 1996 to nearly 4 000 in 2005, with a particularly sharp rise between 2003 and 2004 (53%). It noted that he continued his information visits to the Member States with a view to improving citizens' awareness about their rights, making 120 presentations at conferences, seminars and meetings during 2005, together with 50 interviews with journalists. The Ombudsman sought to target information to those countries where the level of complaints received was lower than might be expected given the size of the population, for example, Germany and Italy. The Ombudsman's media strategy is therefore to raise the Ombudsman's profile in such Member States. Parliament considered, however, that in order to identify target countries, the Ombudsman should rely on surveys on the awareness of the citizens about his work in the various Member States rather than the number of complaints.

Lastly, Parliament recalled that the Ombudsman's Statute laid down by the European Parliament in 1994 imposes no obligation on the Ombudsman to publish his financial and economic interests. However, it asked that the Ombudsman should follow the example set by the European Data Protection Supervisor and his deputy in publishing a declaration of financial interests based on the form used for the Register of Financial Interests of Members of the European Parliament.