Basic information

2003/2044(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2001 discharge: European Environment Agency **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	BLAK Freddy (GUE/NGL)	10/09/2002

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2493	2003-03-07

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
25/09/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	N5-0006/2003	Summary
13/03/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/03/2003	Vote in committee		
19/03/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0074/2003	
08/04/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0140/2003	
08/04/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
08/04/2003	Debate in Parliament		
20/10/2003	Vote in committee		
20/10/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0360/2003	
05/11/2003	Debate in Parliament		
06/11/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0478/2003	Summary
06/11/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

20/12/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2003/2044(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0074/2003	19/03/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0140/2003 OJ C 064 12.03.2004, p. 0023-0124 E	08/04/2003	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0360/2003	20/10/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0478/2003 OJ C 083 02.04.2004, p. 0018-0156 E	06/11/2003	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	06008/2003	07/03/2003	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Non-legislative basic document	N5-0006/2003 OJ C 326 27.12.2002, p. 0017-0025	25/09/2002	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Budget 2003/0891
OJ L 333 20.12.2003, p. 0071-0071 Summary

2001 discharge: European Environment Agency

2003/2044(DEC) - 08/04/2003

COMMUNITY MEASURE : European Parliament Decision 2003/407/EC on the postponement of the decision concerning discharge to the Director of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the Director of the European Environment Agency, the Director of the Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union, the Director of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Director of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, in respect of the implementation of each Agency's budget for the financial year 2001. CONTENT : with the present Decision, the European Parliament has decided to postpone the decision concerning discharge to the Directors of : - the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work; - the European Environment Agency; - the Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union; - the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, and - the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia; in respect of the implementation of each Agency's budget for the financial year 2001. Parliament also presents a resolution which contains the comments accompanying the decision on the postponement of the decisions (please refer to the summary of the European Parliament's opinion dated 8 April 2003).

2001 discharge: European Environment Agency

2003/2044(DEC) - 06/11/2003 - Final act

PURPOSE : to grant discharge to the Director of the European Environment Agency in respect of its implementation of its budget for the financial year 2001. LEGISLATIVE ACT : European Parliament Decision 2003/891/EC on the discharge to the Director of the European Environment Agency in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2001. CONTENT : the European Parliament has given discharge to the Director of the European Environment Agency, in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2001. It records its comments in the accompanying resolution dated 6 November 2003 (please refer to the previous summary).

2001 discharge: European Environment Agency

2003/2044(DEC) - 07/03/2003 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present the Council recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Director of the European Environment Agency in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2001. CONTENT : based on the observations made by the Court of Auditors concerning the finanical year 2001, the Council recommends the Parliament to give a discharge to the Director of the Agency in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2001. Recalling that EUR 4,4 Million (81%) of the EUR 5,4 million in appropriations carried forward from the financial year 2000 to the financial year 2001 have been used and that EUR 8,1 million in appropriations have been carried forward from the financial year 2001 to the financial year 2002 and EUR 1,4 million have been cancelled, the Council considers that the implementation of the agency's budget calls for certain comments to be made. In particular, the Council welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors has been able to record a statement of assurance in respect of the reliability of the Agency's accounts for the financial year 2001, and in respect of the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions as a whole. The Council shares the Court's view on the need to improve the quality and monitoring of the planning of operational activities, and to be rigorous in evaluating the validity of amounts carried over, given the cancellations subsequently made, so as to respect the principle of budgetary annuality. The Council notes that the Agency has set up a system enabling an inventory to be kept, and stresses the importance of continuing efforts to make improvements as regards the depreciation of assets. The Agency should also adopt appropriate measures to remedy the weaknesses noted by the Court in the management of contracts, to improve its planning of purchases, and to establish a precise definition of the criteria to be applied by the bid evaluation committee in the tendering procedure.

2001 discharge: European Environment Agency

2003/2044(DEC) - 25/09/2002 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE ; to present the Court of Auditor's report on the financial statements of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2001. CONTENT : the Court of Auditors has examined the financial statements of the European Environmental Agency for the financial year ended 31 December 2001. This examination has enabled the Court to obtain reasonable assurance that the annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2001 are reliable ad that the underlying transactions, taken as a whole are legal and regular. The main observations made by the Court of Auditors are as follows. Concerning the implementation of the budget : the implementation of the appropriations for the financial year 2001 and of the appropriations carried over from the previous financial year are summarise din this report. Final appropriations for the financial year totalled EUR 21.7 million, 20.9 million (96%) of which were committed. EUR 10.3 million (i.e. 97%) of the EUR 10.6 million of operating appropriations (Title III) were committed. Payments in respect of the appropriations for the financial year totalled EUR 13.2 million, i.e. 63% of the amounts committed. A sum of EUR 8.1 million has to be carried over to the following financial year and EUR 0.4 million had to be cancelled. The appropriations carried over to 2002 essentially concern operating appropriations, which account for EUR 6.9 million. The increase when compared with the previous financial year is EUR 2.5 million. The increase shows that the Agency needs to improve the quality and monitoring of the planning of its activities. The appropriations carried over from the financial year 2000 to 2001 totalled EUR 5.4 million, EUR 4.4 million of which were settled. One EUR 1 million therefore had to be cancelled. In view of these cancellations, which represent an increase when compared with the previous financial year in terms of both absolutely and

relative value, the Agency should be note rigorous in evaluating the validity of the amounts which it carries over. It shows that all the appropriations for the financial year for translation and terminology service (EUR 337 000) were committed in a single operation in December 2001 and no payment was made. The corresponding worksheets (order forms for the work entrusted to the Translation Centre) totalled EUR 18 040. The balance of EUR 318 592 was carried over without justification, contrary to Article 6 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the Agency, and should have been cancelled. In its report concerning the financial year 2000, the court emphasised the unjustified carry-over of appropriations from 2000 for translations to be done in 2001. The checks carried out show that the payments in 2001 using appropriations carried over from 2000 should have been made using appropriations for the financial year 2001. Moreover, as regards the purchase of goods and services, the court states that efforts have been made so far by the Agency to improve its system for planning purchases and for setting it with a multiannual context context should be pursued and extended. Greater formalisation would enable comparisons to be made between estimates and actual outcomes with a view to improving the accuracy of subsequent estimates. In its 1999 and 2000 Annual Reports concerning the Agency, theCourt highlighted weaknesses in the management of contracts, in particular when payment requests were being handled. An examination of the files on the payments made in 2001 showed once again that the financial files do not always contain supporting documents but only a certificate of the authenticity and compliance of the work carried out. The Court also states that the Agency does not participate in the Interinstitutional Group for the Harmonisation of Purchasing Procedures and, for this reason, it does not take part in interinstitutional invitations to tender or in exchanges of information about the purchasing of goods and services. For everyday purchases, it tries to develop forms of cooperation with the branch offices of the Community bodies in Copenhagen. The criteria for evaluating bids are defined in general terms which makes quantitative evaluation difficult. The bids are assessed by an evaluation committee made up of three member which gives its opini on the basis of documents submitted by the tenderers. In general, the Agency tends to favour invitations to tender. In one case, the restricted procedure was used even though the nature and value of the contract required publication in the Official Journal. The Agency has responded to the observations made by the Court. The main points are as follows. The Agency recognises an increase in carry-forward appropriations and is fostering a tighter planning of its activities. It should be noted however that the Agency is in a growth phase, with an increasing budget, and also that part of the appropriations that were carried forward to 2002 relate to earmarked multiannual budget funds. The Agency, during the year 2001, put specific emphasis on assuring annuality for its administrative titles and hence be more rigorous in evaluating the validity of amounts carried over. In doing so it was decided not to use some of the carry-forward appropriations for outstanding payments, and to provide a better implementation basis for the budgetary management for the coming years. The Agency foresees its translation requirements as part of the annual publication planning, which is conducted in parallel to the development of its work programme. The Translation Centre invoices its services on an annual basis, so even if some advance payment may be made during they ear, the total work carried out by the Centre for the Agency during they ear can only be determined after the end of the year. As a consequence, the bulk of the payments corresponding to the work entrusted to the Translation Centre during the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001 was finally paid in March 2002, thanks to the appropriations that had been carried over for this purpose from 2001 to 2002. The Agency inventory system is now in place as acknowledged by the Court. The synchronisation between the accounts and the inventory, specifically on depreciation and exchange rates, will be further developed through regular reconciliations and a yearly inventory stock taking. The Agency has established a Memorandum of Understanding both with Eurostat and with the Joint Research Centre and it also has to be noted that an extensive annual consultation takes place on the mutual work programmes. It is however recognised that the Agency must continue to foster furtherintegration and cooperation with other Community bodies and institutions in order to share resources and capacities. In addition, the Agency recognises the need to develop more specific guidelines to enable more quantitative evaluation by tender evaluation Committees and expects to have such guidelines in place by the autumn 2002. Lastly, the Agency agreed that the price ceilings as defined in some framework contracts are of internal nature and should not be part of the agreements with contractors.

2001 discharge: European Environment Agency

2003/2044(DEC) - 06/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Freddy BLAK (EUL/NGL, Denmark) giving discharge to the European Environment Agency, in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2001. (Please see the document dated 20/10/03.) Whilst the Parliament welcomed the reduction of the amount the Agency carries over, it notes the Agency's statement that, in implementing grant agreements concerning multiannual projects, a certain level of automatic carry-over 'is difficult to avoid'. This problem is 'systemic' in nature as it mainly concerns the relationship with the European Topic Centres which are under contract with the Agency. As projects carried out by such centres account for almost half of the Agency's operational budget, it should intensify its efforts to ensure that these centres operate within a time frame that reflects the 'annuality principle' of the budget. Such efforts would result in a reduction in carryovers. There is scope for developing a harmonised approach between agencies when dealing with 'systematic' problems. The Agency should intensify its contacts with other agencies faced with similar problems in their contractual relations with such centres or national points in order for a 'best practice approach' to be developed and applied. As a general point with regard to the Agencies, the Parliament expressed its concern that the Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) does not carry out any checks on the Agencies. This implies that Articles 71 and 72 of Regulation 2343/2002/EC are not being adhered to and that, in practice, an outside control of the quality of management and control systems of the agencies is left to be carried out in the context of the Court of Auditors control. Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that the necessary resources are made available so that the IAS is in a position to fulfill its tasks with regard to the internal control systems in the Agencies. Finally, it asked the Commission to submit a proposal for an amendment to the constituent acts of the Agencies to ensure that their directors may in future be appointed only with the assent of Parliament.