

**RESOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT****with comments forming an integral part of the decision on the discharge for the implementation of the budget of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia for the financial year 2004**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia for the financial year 2004 <sup>(1)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia for the financial year 2004, together with the Centre's replies <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council's recommendation of 14 March 2006 (5972/2006 — C6-0093/2006),
  - having regard to the EC Treaty, and in particular Article 276 thereof,
  - having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities <sup>(3)</sup>, and in particular Article 185 thereof,
  - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1035/97 of 2 June 1997 establishing a European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia <sup>(4)</sup>, and in particular Article 12a thereof,
  - having regard to Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2343/2002 of 19 November 2002 on the framework Financial Regulation for the bodies referred to in Article 185 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities <sup>(5)</sup>, and in particular Article 94 thereof,
  - having regard to Rule 71 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control and the opinion of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A6-0096/2006),
- A. whereas the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2004 were reliable and that, except for irregularities noted in the award of contracts, the underlying transactions, taken as a whole, were legal and regular,
- B. whereas the Court of Auditors states that it has obtained reasonable assurance from all the agencies, excepting the express reservations in respect of the 2004 financial year concerning the European Agency for Reconstruction, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, the European Training Foundation, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and the European Food Safety Authority,
1. Recalls that, under Article 185 of the Financial Regulation, Parliament shall give discharge for the implementation of the budgets of the bodies set up by the Communities and having legal personality which actually receive grants charged to the budget; points out, however, that not all of these bodies are fully, or even partially, funded via grants charged to the budget; emphasises that the discharge decision therefore covers both the budget and the non-budget funding of these bodies; considers it unacceptable that some of the bodies set up by the Union are accountable for the expenditure of income received from sources other than the budget whilst others, which do not receive a subsidy from the budget, are not; affirms the principle that all Community agencies, whether or not they are subsidised, are subject to discharge by Parliament, even when another discharge authority intervenes in accordance with their basic texts; takes the view that there is a need to review all texts that go against this principle;

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 269, 28.10.2005, p. 48.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 332, 28.12.2005, p. 97.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ L 151, 10.6.1997, p. 1. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1652/2003 (OJ L 245, 29.9.2003, p. 33).

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 72. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1261/2005 (OJ L 201, 2.8.2005, p. 3).

2. Finds table 1 of the Court of Auditors' report, introduced for the first time during the 2003 discharge exercise, which summarises the Centre's powers and responsibilities, governance, resources, activities and services provided, of great value; notes that the information contained in table 1 is supplied by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia; asks the Court of Auditors to verify the contents of table 1;
  3. Insists that as well as spending money properly, agencies should also strive to spend money as efficiently and effectively as possible; invites the Court of Auditors to consider the possibility of extending its specific annual reports on the agencies to include an examination of performance and achievement of objectives; in this context and in line with its resolutions on the 2003 discharge, insists that the following aspects be taken into account: that duplication of work among the agencies must be avoided as much as possible and that measures designed to improve transparency and communication with the public must be clarified, along with Community affirmative action measures at all levels of recruitment, training and the assignment of responsibilities;
  4. Notes that Community agencies do not always have a good image or good press and that many of them do not deserve such a negative image; points out that EU citizens should be made aware of this, with appropriate means being used to explain as often as is necessary the *raison d'être* and achievements of the agencies; calls on the Commission to act accordingly, using whatever means it considers necessary;
  5. Notes that the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 has affected the structures and operating arrangements of the Community agencies in many ways, and that several of the agencies draw attention to these effects in their activity reports, focusing in particular on the increase in the number of administrators; calls on the Commission to assess the real or supposed problems encountered and to recommend the regulatory changes required;
  6. Notes that the Commission has made a commitment to harmonising the way in which activity reports concerning its directorates-general are presented; calls for a similar approach to be taken in respect of the activity reports of the Communities' agencies, which differ significantly in terms of content; calls on the Commission to point out to the Communities' agencies the information and activity indicators that they must provide;
  7. Is pleased to note that the Court of Auditors has been able to obtain reasonable assurance that the annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2004 are reliable and that the underlying transactions, taken as a whole, are legal and regular;
  8. Expresses its concern about the high level of cancelled carry-overs, in particular in title I (staff expenditure);
  9. Is pleased to note that the level of carry-overs decreased significantly; welcomes the Centre's assurances that it has taken measures to further reduce the level of carry-overs; encourages the Centre to improve the way carry-overs are established in order to avoid the high percentage of cancellations of appropriations;
  10. Is pleased to note the Centre's assurance that risk analysis of internal control standards has been carried out and that the *ex-ante* verification checklists have been reviewed;
  11. Is concerned by the irregularities noted by the Court of Auditors in contract tendering and awards; urges the Centre to improve procedures as soon as possible with a view to avoiding similar irregularities in future;
  12. Calls on the Commission to help the agencies follow as closely as possible the work plan agreed for the year ahead, allowing activities to be properly planned and implemented, and particularly to avoid major, last-minute changes to the work load;
  13. Asks the Commission to improve synergies between agencies by making cooperation more effective, avoiding duplication of work and addressing shortcomings, in particular as regards common areas such as training, the implementation of Community policies across the board, the use of the latest management systems and solving problems relating to sound management of the budget.
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