RESOLUTION

of the European Parliament containing the comments accompanying the decision concerning discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the 2001 financial year — Section VIII — Ombudsman

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

— having regard to the Revenue and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet in respect of the financial year 2001 (SEC(2002)405 – C5-0248/2002),

— having regard to the annual report of the European Court of Auditors for the financial year 2001, together with the institutions' replies (C5-0538/2002) ([1]),

— having regard to the Statement of Assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the European Court of Auditors pursuant to Article 248 of the EC Treaty (C5-0538/2002),

— having regard to the Council's recommendation of 7 March 2003 (C5-0087/2003),

— having regard to Articles 272(10) and 275 of the EC Treaty,

— having regard to Article 22(2) and (3) of the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977 ([2]) and Article 50 of the Financial Regulation of 25 June 2002 ([3]),

— having regard to Rule 93a and Annex V of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A5-0101/2003/rev1),

1. Notes that the European Parliament approved the Annual Report of the European Ombudsman for the year 2001, which is comprehensive and detailed in its overview of the activities carried out during the year, in particular of the various cases processed;

2. Highlights the fact that the analysis of the complaints shows that 77 % of them led to an inquiry against the Commission and that, in most cases, a lack of transparency was involved (Parliament resolution of 26 September 2002 on the Annual Report of the European Ombudsman for the year 2001 ([4]));

3. Welcomes the Ombudsman's willingness ([5]) to supply the discharge authority with the annual activity report drawn up by the principal authorising officer under Article 60(7) of the new Financial Regulation;

4. Notes with satisfaction the steady improvement in the level of budget execution from 75,72 % of appropriations in 1997 to 91,24 % in 2001 and 98,18 % (estimated) in 2002 and the concomitant rise in the utilisation rate of appropriations carried forward from one year to the next;

5. Notes that the cooperation agreements ([6]) between the Ombudsman and the European Parliament in administrative and financial matters enable significant savings to be made; encourages the European Parliament and the Ombudsman to continue and to develop their interinstitutional cooperation.

([1]) OJ C 295, 28.11.2002, p. 1.
([2]) OJ L 356, 31.12.1977, p. 1.
([3]) OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.
([4]) P5_TA(2002)0443.
([5]) Replies to questionnaire PE 315.844 (Q3).
([6]) See management account SEC(2002) 405.