



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Culture and Education

2012/2167(DEC)

18.12.2012

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies

(COM(2012)0436 – C7-0224/2012 – 2012/2167(DEC))

Rapporteur: Morten Løkkegaard

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes with satisfaction that in 2011, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) further simplified its administrative procedures by introducing online reports and increasing the use of e-forms, lump sums and flat-rate payments; supports the idea of shifting increasingly towards lump sums and flat-rate decisions for the next programme generation (2014–2020);
2. Recalls that beneficiaries depend on timely payments to carry out planned activities; is pleased that the EACEA has exceeded the target deadlines for payments set by the Commission;
3. Is concerned by the significant errors in the underlying transactions by the EACEA in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007–2013) that were found through ex-post controls; notes that these errors are mainly due to the lack of adequate justifying documents from beneficiaries and the non-respect of eligibility rules; encourages the EACEA to further improve its control systems and to inform beneficiaries of their financial obligations and controls;
4. Welcomes the improvements to the management and control systems of the National Agencies and National Authorities and the fact that the error rate for the implementation of the programmes through National Agencies in 2011 has dropped down to 1%, significantly lower than in previous years;
5. Notes that the pilot project on European research grants for cross-border investigative journalism was abandoned at the end of 2010, as the integrity of the journalism could not be ensured; therefore welcomes the fact that, after intense discussions with the Parliament in 2011, the Commission is now launching a preparatory action under the same name with the aim of developing models for independent EU-funded journalism.