1996 discharge: EC general budget

1997/2075(DEC) - 15/12/1998

Presenting his report, Mr James ELLES (EPP, UK) wondered whether the fairly heavy criticism contained in the motion for a resolution merited refusal to grant discharge. He set out the main concerns of Parliament which was not happy with the way in which the Commission had responded to its resolution of March 1998 on this same discharge. Parliament remained concerned about the Commission's independence in the fight against fraud and its refusal to make available all the documents on the ECHO Office. The resolution therefore proposed an action programme aimed at resolving these issues well beyond the 1996 discharge procedure. As a reminder, discharge was a technical matter with no political overtones and was not equivalent to a motion of censure of the Commission. During the debate, Mrs Pauline GREEN, President of the Socialist Group, announced that her group would table a motion of censure (which it would vote against) if Parliament did not vote on the discharge. This would therefore, given the procedure's current possibilities, give its confidence to the current European Commission.