1999 discharge: EC general budget, Parliament

2000/2157(DEC) - 12/03/2001 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: presentation of the Council's recommendation on the discharge to be granted to the European Parliament on the implementation of its budget in 1999. CONTENT: Based on the observations contained in the Court of Auditors' report concerning the 1999 financial year, the Council recommends the European Parliament is granted discharge for the implementation of its 1999 budget. However, the implementation of this budget provoked a series of remarks on the part of the Council which need to be taken into account as soon as possible. Firstly, the Council welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors considers that the operations under heading 5 of the financial perspectives are generally satisfactory, as was already the case in 1998. It notes that the Commission, on 29 December 2000, adopted a regulation concerning the accounting management of the European Communities' non-financial fixed assets and it hopes that this text, in parallel with the intensified inter-institutional co-operation will permit an improvement in the presentation of the consolidated balance and off balance sheet commitments. It also invites the Commission to make some progress with regard to planning the management of its real estate contracts. In parallel, as was already done in 1997, following the Commission's 29 October 1996 communication to the Council and the Parliament on the financing of the new European Parliament buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg (COM (96) 518 final), and in 2000, in the context of its recommendation for the 1998 discharge, the Council reaffirmed that the Treaty did not permit a European Institution (the Parliament) to ask for a loan. It recalled that in 1997 a solution for indirect financing via a 'specific purposes vehicle' (SPV) had not been the subject of any objections of principle on the part of the Council. The Council shares the Court of Auditors' opinion according to which the Institutions' property projects should form part of a long-term inter-institutional real estate policy. The Council noted the other observations made by the Court, in particular in regard to the expenses of the European Parliament's political groups. In this regard, it indicated that it would give its ongoing attention to developments regarding this matter.