2004 Budget: section III, Commission

2003/2001(BUD) - 18/02/2003

The committee adopted the report by Jan MULDER (ELDR, NL) on the 2004 budget - Section III (Commission). It said that changes were needed to the 2004 EU budget guidelines if the new Member States were to be integrated into all the Community's policies. In a difficult economic climate, MEPs focused on the need to complete the single market, the Lisbon strategy and the sustainable development strategy. They also pointed out that next year's budget would have to contribute to regional and social cohesion in a wider Europe. However, the current limits of the financial perspective only allowed these ambitions to be satisfied to an extremely limited degree. Moreover, the outcome of the accession negotiations did not amount to an agreement on the figures needed to adjust the financial perspective, which were currently being reviewed. In more detail, the committee highlighted the need to: - increase rural development aid under the CAP, especially given the disparities between current and future Member States; - guarantee the safety of food products from both Community and non-Community countries; - increase coordination of security measures at the EU's external borders and improve immigration and asylum policy; - provide for the humanitarian needs likely to emerge in Iraq and the Middle East while preserving sufficient capacity to fund the EP's priorities, particularly in the Balkans and the Mediterranean countries; - enable the EP to be more closely involved in planning, decision-making and funding of common foreign and security policy measures.