Amending budget 6/2003: section III Commission, structural Funds and budget line B7-811

2003/2197(BUD) - 25/11/2003

The committee adopted the report by Göran FÄRM (PES, S) approving Draft Amending Budget No. 6 /2003 without amendment following the global agreement reached at the budgetary conciliation between Parliament and Council on 24 November 2003. The committee nevertheless reiterated its dissatisfaction with the under-implementation of payment appropriations for Structural Funds, particularly for the pre-2000 programmes, and pointed out that outstanding commitments at 7 November 2003 amounted to EUR 12.8 billion. MEPs also said that the proposal to reduce by EUR 5 billion the payment appropriations for pre-2000 programmes in the 2003 budget weakened the repeatedly-expressed political priority of making headway in implementing and closing those programmes. Lastly, the committee pointed out that the EU's preliminary draft budget for 2004 only contained EUR 984 million in payment appropriations for those programmes. MEPs questioned whether all payment claims could be met and recalled that the Commission had been invited to present an Amending Budget, should payments needs exceed the appropriations entered for 2004.