MED programmes. Special report 1/96 Court of Auditors

1996/2108(COS) - 02/07/1997

The report by Mr Juan Manuel FABRA VALLES (PPE, E) was adopted. In the resolution based on the Court of Auditors' Special Report 1/96, the committee recalled that the decentralized Mediterranean programmes (MED) launched in 1992 had received funds of ECU 78 million up to the end of 1995. The European Commission had retained the Trans-Mediterranean Networks Agency (ARTM), an international firm under Belgian law, and had delegated extensive powers to it. Given the irregularities in connection with the management of these programmes noted by the Court of Auditors, the European Commission had decided to suspend them. The report noted that, although the Commission had gone to considerable lengths to take account of the Court of Auditors' special report, the necessary coherence and coordination were lacking and it called on the European Commission to forward all the details of the case to the legal authorities in the Member States in question so that they could consider any legal implications. The Commission was also called upon to bring any disciplinary action against the Community officials responsible which might prove necessary in the light of the administrative inquiry initiated and to inform the European Parliament immediately of the measures adopted. The report called for the anti-fraud unit (UCLAF) to become independent pending the establishment of a European court to try fraud and corruption cases involving the Community budget. The committee approved the resumption of 75 projects under the MED programmes subject to certain conditions (relating mainly to the revision of the management system). The others were to remain blocked pending completion of the procedure to verify the contracts. The rapporteur, Mr FABRA VALLES, considered that the approach was the right one: "All the warning indictors of malfunctions in the system worked: the Court of Auditors, the European Parliament, the UCLAF and the Commission. However, one of these indicators might work better if it was positioned differently on the dashboard, i.e. if the UCLAF were independent".