1996 discharge: EC general budget

1997/2075(DEC) - 10/12/1998

The Committee, following several extremely close votes, adopted the report by James ELLES (EPP, UK) recommending to the House that the Commission be granted the budgetary discharge for 1996. The final vote was 14 in favour and 13 against.The fiercest battle was over paragraph 19, where the two options - whether or not to grant the discharge - were set out. Neither of the two amendments put to the vote on this paragraph and advocating one or other of the two solutions obtained a majority: the result was a tie (14-14). Only when the vote on the initial paragraph 19 was held - by split vote - did the option of granting the discharge win the day. This paragraph reads "In the light of these considerations, [Parliament] decides to give ["give" adopted by 14 votes to 13] a discharge to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the 1996 financial year".The proposal that the discharge be granted is accompanied by a call for a work programme to be established over the next twelve months to ensure significant change with a view to modernising the Commission by 1st January 2000. The work programme would include:the establishment of an Anti-Fraud Office along the lines of the Bösch report (by 30th June 1999);a report on the statute for EU officials, with proposed changes (by 31st March 1999); a report on the screening of the Commission services (by 31st March 1999), including a separation of duties between the permanent civil service and technical assistance offices;the presentation of a draft code of conduct for nominations of senior officials (by 28th February 1999), adoption of such a code by 30th April 1999 and all nominations of senior officials to be frozen until adoption of the code;a legislative proposal for the revision of the Financial Regulation including reference to personal responsibility of Commissioners, including the agencies (decentralised bodies) (by 28th February 1999);Commissioners' declarations of their financial interests to be transparent and publicly available.