2001 discharge: 6th, 7th and 8th European Development Funds EDF

2002/2087(DEC) - 19/03/2003

The committee adopted the report by Ole SØRENSEN (ELDR, DK) recommending that Parliament grant discharge to the Commission for the 6th, 7th and 8th European Development Fund budgets as part of the 2001 discharge procedure. However, the report made a number of criticisms in its accompanying resolution. It expressed reservations over the increasing use of budget support and called on the Commission to supply more detailed information on when and under which circumstances this was a suitable instrument to use and to monitor closely the quality of public finance management in beneficiary countries. As regards development aid to sector programmes provided in conjunction with other donors, the report pointed out that this kind of aid created specific problems of control and monitoring and that, before any support was provided, the Commission should establish measurable indicators for progress drawn up in relation to objectives and a solid and reliable baseline, obtain sufficient guarantees that the planned programme fell inside EU development objectives and be satisfied that the financial reporting system used by the multilateral organisation corresponded to the standards of the European Court of Auditors and that accounts would be forwarded on time. Other points raised in the report included: a call for greater coordination and complementarity of national aid programmes and EU development policy priorities; the need to reform the management of external assistance; the need to rectify weaknesses in internal control and monitoring systems at the Commission; and the need for a better definition of the "frontiers of human rights, democracy and good governance" and for more information on the criteria for suspending aid due to violation of the human rights clause. Lastly, the committee repeated Parliament's previous calls for the EDF to be included in the EU budget and regretted that no progress had been made on this issue.