

Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Member States

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The committee adopted the report (under consultation procedure) by Antonio DI PIETRO (ELDR, I) amending the draft Convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters between the EU Member States. The rapporteur was unenthusiastic about the draft convention proposed by Council, describing it as "the outcome of four years' horse-trading" and as "the mountain bringing forth a mouse". He also objected strongly to the extremely short period Council had left for Parliament to deliver its opinion. However, he felt that Parliament should approve the draft convention with amendments, since stronger action was needed in order to combat cross-border crime, and the present convention could be viewed as a first, albeit small, step in this direction. Having decided to accept the draft convention in principle, the committee adopted some seventy amendments, in order to place greater emphasis on the fundamental rights of defendants (including minors), to clarify a series of obscure or contradictory passages and to delete Article 18 on the interception of telecommunications.