

European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex)

2003/0273(CNS) - 19/02/2004

The committee adopted the report by Christian VON BOETTICHER (EPP-ED, D) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure: - the Agency's remit should not include coordinating or organising joint return operations for the removal of third-country nationals illegally residing in the Member States. MEPs argued that the Agency could easily acquire a reputation as an "expulsion agency" and that, as long as there is no European asylum and immigration policy, there should not be a common expulsion policy; - the committee felt that the design of the Agency was too intergovernmental and therefore tabled a number of amendments aimed at ensuring greater involvement by the Commission and Parliament: reporting requirements should be tightened up to ensure that Parliament is better informed about the Agency's work; Commission officials should be assigned to form part of the agency's staff; the Director of the Agency should be appointed by the Commission; Parliament should have the right to hear the candidate for Director prior to his/her appointment and to issue an opinion; Parliament should be able to request a hearing with the Director at any time on any subject related to the Agency's activities; the power to dismiss the Director should lie with the Commission; the Management Board should be composed of twelve members, six of whom are appointed by the Council and six by the Commission (the proposal had provided for a twelve-member board appointed by the Council, with two Commission representatives); lastly, the Board should be chaired by a Commission representative; - MEPs deleted the provision enabling the Agency to set up specialised branches in the Member States, on the grounds that setting up an independent agency in one Member State and also having specialised branches in other Member States was neither effective nor efficient; - the Council should take a decision on the seat of the Agency before 1 January 2005, and the Member State designated to host the Agency should contribute financially to its setting up; - lastly, the committee said that the Agency should study the need for and the feasibility of setting up a European Border Guard, and argued that the decision to establish such a Corps remained a political one, for which very good reasons must be established.