EP Rules of procedure, annex V: procedure for the consideration and adoption on the giving of the discharge

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The Committee has unanimously adopted Mr Fayot's report on an amendment to Annex V of Parliament's Rules of Procedure (governing the procedure for the consideration and adoption of a decision on giving a budget discharge). In order to complete the budget procedure and allow a discharge to be given for subsequent years, the committee responsible is allowed to use the procedure of "the closure of the accounts" of all the Community's revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities. If the proposal to close the accounts is not adopted in plenary, the report is referred back to the committee responsible. The discharge can be postponed for either technical or political reasons. In order to distinguish between the procedures applicable in each case, and to bring it more into line with Article 89 of the Financial Regulation, the procedure for postponing the discharge has been altered. Now, if there is a technical reason for deferring the discharge, the committee responsible may table a motion for a resolution postponing the decision for a discharge or else instruct the President of Parliament to inform the Commission of the reasons for the postponement. Should Parliament postpone its decision on giving a discharge, the Commission must make every effort to take measures, as soon as possible, to facilitate removal of any obstacles to that decision. The procedure for refusing the discharge has also been amended. Parliament now has to decide on any proposals for such a decision by a majority of votes cast in plenary (pursuant to Article 141 of the EC Treaty) and not by an absolute majority (314 votes). This change meets an immediate need: it enables the 1996 discharge procedure to be completed. It was therefore decided that all the changes will enter into force immediately. To amend an annex to the Rules of Procedure, only a simple majority is needed.