EU humanitarian aid: period 1992-1995. Special report 2/97 Court of Auditors

1997/2040(COS) - 16/01/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Juan Manuel FABRA VALLES (PPE, E) on the Court of Auditors' report on humanitarian aid, the European Parliament expressed regret that the Amsterdam Treaty contained no provisions relating to the subject. It likewise regretted the lack of operational coordination in the field between the Union's and the Member States' aid, called for greater coordination of national and European policies, and agreed with the Court of Auditors that this coordination should be strengthened by means of a humanitarian aid charter. However, this should not be restricted to emergency humanitarian aid but should take account of the indissoluble link between emergency aid, rehabilitation and development. Aid policy had hitherto principally focused on individual operations; Parliament called for this approach to be replaced with a more long-term approach and for better management of humanitarian aid. It hoped in particular that: - ECHO would improve its capacity, both among its coordinators in the field and with its regular partner organizations, to arrive promptly at an analysis and assessment of the aid operations to be carried out in a crisis, - ECHO would adopt clearer criteria for its own projects, - the services of the Commission would develop longer-term relationships with key partners (e.g. larger NGOs and the UN) in order to implement together a common overall programme strategy for chronic emergencies (e.g. the African Great Lakes Region, the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, Northern Iraq), - tried and tested partners would be preselected for certain types of measure which had to be carried out swiftly. It called on the Commission to define in collaboration with the Court of Auditors general procedures permitting humanitarian aid to be monitored more fully and to reduce rapidly and permanently existing imbalances in the allocation of Community appropriations for humanitarian aid to NGOs. It considered that complete lists of the contracts concluded with NGOs should be published annually and that the appointment procedure for non-established staff at ECHO should become more transparent. Similarly, Parliament considered that the Commission should draw up a list of experts in technical aid from which to recruit non-established staff in future. Parliament called on the Commission to follow the recommendation of the Court of Auditors and create a central unit to assume responsibility within the Commission for evaluating its aid programmes, including ECHO, MEDA, PHARE and TACIS, to ensure closer monitoring and constant evaluation of measures in progress. Lastly, pointing out that ECHO was expressly established by the Commission in 1991 for a limited seven-year period, it expressed the expectation that the Commission would consult Parliament and the Council at the end of that period about the organization's future.