Structural Funds: financial control, net financial corrections procedure

1997/2121(COS) - 18/07/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Joan COLOM I NAVAL (PSE, E), the European Parliament expressed the view that the procedure for applying financial corrections to the financing activities of the Structural Funds might be introduced on the basis of the pragmatic framework proposed by the Commission. However, it considered that certain shortcomings detracted from both the effectiveness and the transparency of the procedure, and reduced the clarity of relations with the discharge authority: - the Commission should be able to examine the accounts underpinning the declaration by the national body responsible for certifying the validity of the request for final payment and the legality and regularity of the underlying operations; to that end, it should be able to accredit the paying agencies and audit their accounts; - the procedure should be defined more clearly, particularly as regards the exchanges of views with Member States prior to the application of corrections; a conciliation committee might be envisaged; - the criteria for applying flat-rate corrections should be clarified, particularly as regards the scale of the correction, and the period to which it applied; - the relationship between the decision to make a correction and the decision to grant a discharge relating to the same period should be clarified. Parliament called on the Commission, if these shortcomings were not rectified within the current legal framework, to undertake to submit future proposals relating to the regulations governing the Funds and the Financial Regulation.