Interparliamentary conference on combating fraud against the Community budget

1996/2146(INI) - 19/09/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the own-initiative report by Mrs Diemut THEATO (PPE, D) on the results of the Interparliamentary Conference on combating fraud against the Community budget. The principal measures called for were as follows: 1. Inserting in the Treaty a legal basis permitting the adoption of anti-fraud regulations under a co-decision procedure together with machinery requiring the Member States to safeguard Community finances in an equivalent manner. The report also considered that 'combating corruption' should be expressly enshrined in the Treaty as an issue of common interest. 2. The harmonisation of measures in the following fields: a) administrative: particularly administrative sanctions and controls, especially regarding exclusion from or withdrawal of the benefit in case of irregularity; b) legislative: - by the early ratification by the Member States of the Convention on protecting the financial interests of the Community, adopted in 1995; - by the conclusion and signing of two protocols: one on the prosecution of officials for corruption, the other on the liability of legal persons and judicial cooperation (whose decisions should be given greater impetus); c) procedural: by making more homogeneous the legal and judicial instruments employed in the course of the judicial proceedings and during the recovery of sums fraudulently obtained or overpaid; 3. The establishment by the Member States of multi-disciplinary bodies to combat fraud. 4. Defining more closely the role of UCLAF and providing it with a statute which enables it to take concrete action at each stage of the fight against fraud. 5. Stepping up existing administrative cooperation. 6. Establishing genuine judicial cooperation through the elimination of existing legal barriers by determining, for example, which Member State is to handle the prosecution in cases where a fraud has been committed in several Member States and by establishing regulations for rogatory acts and for their probatory value. The report also called for the removal of physical and legal impediments to extradition and to legal aid in criminal matters.