1996 discharge: EC general budget (other sections)

1997/2076(DEC) - 07/10/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

After refusing by 286 votes to 201, with 7 abstentions, to refer the report back to committee, as called for by Mr Edward KELLETT-BOWMAN (PPE, UK), the European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Joaquim MIRANDA (GUE/NGL, P) as it stood. As regards the European Parliament, Parliament gave its Secretary-General discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the 1996 financial year, while stressing various aspects of internal management (particularly Parliament's procedures for awarding contracts and certain appointment practices and internal rules). As regards the Ombudsman, it authorised the giving of discharge to the accounting officer for the 1996 financial year, while stating that in future the Ombudsman's budget should be independent of that of Parliament. It gave discharge to the Registrar of the Court of Justice and the Secretaries-General of the Court of Auditors and the Committee of the Regions in respect of the implementation of their budgets for the 1996 financial year. However, it was unable to give discharge to the Economic and Social Committee until Parliament's conditions and requests had been satisfied (including the giving of discharge to the accounting officer), as required under Article 77 of the Financial Regulation. It may be recalled that the annual report of the Court of Auditors had stressed certain irregularities with regard to the management of the ESC's appropriations. Consequently, Parliament refused the discharge and called for the problems to be referred to the Court of Auditors and UCLAF to enable the various administrative responsibilities to be determined and to enable the reliability of the new system for reimbursement and recovery of incorrectly paid expenditure to be checked. Criticising the attitude of the ESC's Financial Controller, it called for information contained in the ESC's revenue and expenditure account and financial statement to be transparent, comprehensive and accurate in future.