Repercussions in the case of the MED programmes

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The repercussions of the affair of the MED programmes caused Parliament on 31 March 1998 to postpone the discharge to the Commission for the 1996 financial year. These programmes were decentralised cooperation programmes with the Mediterranean countries up to 1996. In the implementation of these programmes wrongful payments amounting to at least ECU 10 million were established (for the period 1993-1996). In adopting the report by Mr Juan FABRE VALLÉS (EPP, E) Parliament reasserted its view that it was for the national judicial authorities to decide on any criminal proceedings. It therefore called on the Commission, for the third and last time, to forward the entire file, including new additional evidence of serious irregularities, on the MED affair to the judicial authorities in Belgium, France and Italy before 1 December 1998. Should the Commission fail to respond to this request, Parliament proposed examining the possibility of forwarding to the judicial authorities everything in the file at its disposal and, in the framework of the discharge procedure for 1996, of bringing proceedings against the Commission (pursuant to Article 175 of the Treaty). Parliament was convinced that the Commission had damaged its own credibility in disciplinary proceedings and expected it to assume full responsibility. The Commission was called on to exclude from new decentralised cooperation programmes with Mediterranean countries any operators who in the past had failed to honour their co-financing obligations. It was also called on to recover in full all the amounts incorrectly paid.