Fight against fraud and protection of financial interests of the Communities. Annual report 2001

2002/2211(INI) - 13/03/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on its own-initiative report drafted by Herbert BOSCH (PES, Austria) on protecting the Community's financial interest and the fight against fraud. (Please refer to the document dated 19/02/03.) It criticised the fact that the amounts still to be recovered in connection with cases of fraud and irregularities established by Member States, OLAF and the Commission have built up over the years to almost EUR 3 billion, which Parliament called an entirely unacceptable state of affairs. Pending the establishment of an effective recovery procedure, the Commission should halt payments as soon as OLAF assessments substantiates reasonable suspicion of fraud and the Office opens an investigation. On the cases connected to Eurostat, Parliament stated that it finds incomprehensible the fact that EUROGRAMME was awarded 70 contracts by the Commission between 1996 and 2001, in spit of giving the Commission false information. OLAF's handling of this case is criticised, and Parliament asks OLAF's Supervisory Committee to make a thorough examination of OLAF's work in connection with Eurostat. On the matter of EuroCost, Parliament criticises the fact that the relevant report by DG Audit was not submitted to the Commissioner responsible for financial control. It expresses astonishment that the Commission apparently approved the activities of the Eurostat official who was a founding member of EuroCost. On the matter of enlargement, Parliament expressed concern about the financial crime being perpetrated from Kalingrad. and asked OLAF to cooperate with the Russian tax police to draw up a survey of crime in the region. Finally, Parliament required further action from the Commission on the development of an information system designed to exclude bidders already convicted of fraud from public invitation to tender procedures.