

# 1998 discharge: EC general budget

1999/2050(DEC) - 13/04/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its resolution, drafted by Ms. Gabriele STAUNER (EPP/ED, D), on the postponement of the discharge to the Commission in respect of implementation of the general budget of the EU for the 1998 financial year. The Parliament informs the Commission that it postpones discharge and asks it to take steps by 15 May 2000, among other things, to: - to make a commitment to the target of cutting the current error rate of more than five per cent detected by the Court of Auditors by a considerable rate, for example by two percentage points, in 2001 and of arriving at a positive statement of assurance in 2003 at the latest on the basis of a method to be agreed with the Court of Auditors, the budgetary authority and the Commission; - a clarification of the criteria that determine the proportionality of the reduction of a financial correction and clear rules for which cases a decision of the Commissioner or the College is required (against the background of the Flécharde case); - a statement that it does not consider the Flécharde case as closed until the opinion of the Court of Auditors has been analysed and all outstanding questions raised by the Parliament have been resolved; - calling on OLAF (anti-fraud office) to launch an investigation into the Flécharde case to identify those responsible for arranging the disappearance of documents; - a commitment to present a detailed regulation on new archive routines, assurances that a person within each DG has been given responsibility for archives, and an undertaking that where documents are found to be missing, this will lead to a full administrative enquiry; - a commitment to re-examine the ECHO case and to re-open a formal investigation in accordance with the Staff Regulations if new evidence were to become available; - in the MED affair, for the complete dossier to be submitted to the appropriate judicial authorities in Belgium, France and Italy, and for agreement, if necessary, to launch statutory disciplinary proceedings against the officials involved, in the light of the findings of the national judicial authorities; - submission of the results of the 1998 systematic review of the contracts awarded to visiting scientists; a Commission initiative to provide the investigating Belgian public prosecutor with full information on the circumstances in which irregular contracts were allocated and signed; - launching a formal administrative investigation to ascertain responsibilities in connection with the withheld warning of serious deficiencies at the Joint Research Centre; - submission of a report by the Financial Controller on the number of correcting communications and postponements/ withholdings of approvals in 1998, including an analysis of the most frequent types of errors; - submission of a report on action taken by the Member States who have not yet implemented the integrated administration and control system for agricultural expenditure; - an update on the actions which the Commission has taken in response to the recommendations of the EP's Committee of Inquiry into the Community Transit System; - a full report on the number and outcome of disciplinary proceedings carried out since 1998 in all cases in which the Community's financial interests are affected; - a clear commitment by the Commission to the principles for access to information, as defined in its 19 January 2000 resolution on the 1997 discharge; - a response to the proposals to set up an external chamber at the Court of Auditors or the Court of Justice to deal with disciplinary procedures for budgetary irregularities as soon as possible; - a commitment to include an independent external element in its disciplinary procedure.