2000 discharge: European Agency for reconstruction financial accounts, aid for Kosovo

2001/2238(DEC) - 10/04/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Eurpean Parliament adopted the report by Mr Bart STAES (GREENS/EFA, B) concerning the discharge for the European Agency for Reconstruction for the 2000 financial years. In the resolution annexed to its opinion, with particular regard to the financial control, the Parliament insists on the need to promote adequate investigation, including, as appropriate, an internal evaluation by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), of any well-founded suspicion of mismanagement and corruption linked to investments in favour of powerstations in Kosovo. More specifically, with regard to the European Agency on Reconstruction, Parliament congratulates the Agency on its good performance in 2000 in connection with the implementation of the reconstruction programme and applauds the individual commitment displayed by the staff seconded to the Agency, who are required to perform their work under what are sometimes very difficult circumstances. It points out, further, that the staff of EC TAFKO likewise carried out their task in an exemplary fashion in the period immediately following the war. Moreover, the largest item in the Agency's budget is that dealing with the 'rehabilitation of the energy sector'; in that connection, Parliament draws attention to the incomprehension of the local population when faced with the paradoxical situation of daily power cuts. It notes that closer co-operation with Belgrade is essential to improve the energy situation in Kosovo and will facilitate UNMIK's (United Nations Mission in Kosovo) task of finding creative solutions to allow the Kosovo Electricity Company (KEK) to have a legal corporate status and to establish mechanisms for the international financial institutions to provide credit to KEK, as the donors cannot provide indefinite financing through grants for all the investment and recurrent needs of Kosovo. On the other hand, the Parliament welcomes the Action Plan for the energy sector agreed in October 2001 between the Commission and the Agency which lays down the benchmarks to be achieved by UNMIK and KEK and it applauds the effective and economical approach employed by the Agency in the housing, transport and agriculture sectors. Concerning the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Special Representative Secretary General and European Commission, the Parliament calls on UNMIK to implement the Action Plan of essential measures, agreed upon by the Commission and UNMIK, notably regarding the need for a multi-media campaign aimed at raising the public awareness of power sector problems which contribute to wastage and non-payment. UNMIK is urged likewise to draw up a transport policy so that the sustainability of the investments can be guaranteed. Parliament urges UNMIK, further, to take account of the observations made by the Court of Auditors concerning the high customs duties and sales taxes imposed on agricultural inputs, which act as a disincentive to agricultural production. The Special Representative Secretary General (SRSG) of the United Nations in Kosovo is urged to make much greater efforts to draw up a policy framework and a long-term strategy to ensure the sustainability of the EC and international investment in Kosovo. The Commission, which funds the EU pillar of UNMIK, is called upon to to discuss the development of a sustainable policy and a regulatory framework with UNMIK and the provisionalinstitutions for self-government (PISG), in particular the Kosovan President, the Kosovo Prime Minister and government and the Kosovo Assembly; requests that a report on the development of a sustainable policy and regulatory framework and on the progress of the sectoral Action Plans agreed with the Commission be included in the UNMIK end-of-year report for 2002. As regards the Kosovo authorities, the Parliament calls on the relevant Kosovo authorities to take the necessary steps, as provided for in the above-mentioned Action plan, to raise the revenue collection rate, curb the electricity consumption, and formalise an agreement on electricity exchanges with Serbia and neighbouring countries, as Kosovo's power generation system has to import electricity during peak periods and export it during off-peak times.