1999 discharge: EC general budget, section III Commission

2000/2155(DEC) - 04/04/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament voted 422 to 48 with 15 abstentions to clear the accounts of the EU's 1999 budget but in doing so called for a revision of the Framework Agreement so that any MEP has the right to receive confidential information from the Commission when this is considered necessary. The resolution drafted by Mr Freddy BLAK (PES, DK) calls on the Commission to cut the error rate with a view to obtaining a positive 'Statement of Assurance' from the Court of Auditors for the 2003 budget at the lastest. (Please refer to the previous document). The Council and the Parliament have both been criticised for imposing tasks on the Commission, for which it does not have sufficient human resources. Therefore, the budgetary authority is called upon to to make the resources available to the Commission to implement the tasks imposed on it. Furthermore, the Member States which have not yet ratified the 1995 Convention on the Protection of Financial Interests, namely Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg, are called upon to do as soon as possible. The Parliament underscores the urgent need for clarification of OLAF's information policy. According to the Parliament, it is therefore essential to continue the debate between OLAF and its competent committee, the Committee on Budgetary Control, so as to lay down agreed, precise and binding ground rules on the matter. The European Parliament also adopted an amendment which regrets that the Commission has not forwarded certain information and documents requested by the discharge authority, even after the conclusion of the Framework Agreement. It calls, in light of this experience, for the revision of the Framework Agreement, this process being governed by the following principles: - confirmation of the right of any MEP to demand and receive confidential information from the Commission, in conformity with Article 197; - unreserved application of provision of Annex VII to the Rules of Procedure on the consideration of confidential documents, which includes the right of any committee member to consider confidential documents; - forwarding of complete original documents without prior alterations or obliterated text.