Europol's future developments

2003/2070(INI) - 10/04/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted the report by Maurizio TURCO (IND, I) and Christian Ulrik von BOETTICHER (EPP-ED, D) by 364 votes in favour, 80 against and 7 abstentions, a new recommendation to the Council on the future development of Europol. The Parliament states that the initiatives presented do not address nor do they significantly improve the fundamental shortcomings already highlighted in Parliament's recommendation of 30 May 2002 concerning Europol (please refer to CNS/2002/0804). As regards the question of legal basis, the Parliament argues that the Council should freeze the procedure regarding the Danish initiative on a Protocol amending the Europol Convention (see CNS/2002/814). The Convention should be converted into a regulation, allowing Europol to operate in a flexible manner and making Europol part of the first pillar. Regulation should be adopted by co-decision with Parliament. The level of judicial control within Europol should be equivalent to the standards laid down under the first pillar. The Parliament also addressed other recommendations to the Council. On the budget, part of the Member States' contributions to the funding of Europol should be replaced with from the EU budget. The Parliament's democratic power of control should be strengthened. Therefore the annual activity report should be forwarded both to the Council and the Parliament, and these should be equally involved in the procedure for the appointment and dismissal of the Director of Europol. Parliament should have a formal right to invite the Director of Europol to appear before the competent committee. The Parliament recommends that data protection should be equivalent to that guaranteed under the first pillar. Member States and Europol should not authorise the transfer of data to third parties until provisions guaranteeing data protection are in force. Parliament calls on the Council that Europol, in co-operation with the Member States, should collect data on trends in international crime. The data should be incorporated in the annual reports. Close cooperation is required between Europol, Eurojust and OLAF. On transparency, Parliament calls on Europol to adopt as soon as possible rules on access to documents in conformity with regulation 1049/2001. Europol is invited to directly apply the principles of this Regulation and it should also set up a list, for public consultation, of public bodies responsible for the prevention and the fight against crime.