2003 budget: interinstitutional conciliation procedure

2002/2027(BUD) - 02/07/2002 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Goran FARM (PES, Sweden) on the 2003 budget with a view to the conciliation procedure before the Council's first reading. (Please refer to the summary dated 19/06/02.) Parliament reiterated its concern about the limited margin left under heading 4 in respect of the needs appearing over the past years for financing external actions, considering that EUR 400 million have been added to the initial ceiling through the flexibility instrument. Most of the margin left under heading 3 could be consumed only to finance the pilot projects and preparatory actions allowed by paragraph 37 of the IIA, leaving no margin for increasing other programmes. On the question of payments, Parliament stressed that EUR 4.7 billion is left under the overall ceiling of the Financial Perspective. It was concerned that margins left for payments will not allow the improvement of the implementation of common policies nor of a reduction of the RAL. It deplored the fact that the Commission links the problem of RAL with the lowest level of payments after declaring that the PDB for 2003 could exceed the payments ceilings. It went on to urge that the use of new instruments be expanded (performance reserve, activity-based budgeting, assessment of the economic and social impact of projects) and that the application, authorisation and payment procedures be reviewed for unnecessary rigidity. The present situation is not the result of a temporary malfunctioning of the system, but is definitely a structural problem. On agriculture, the Commission was asked to explain the discrepancy in funding for the sheepmeat and goat meat sector: the increase is EUR 1242 million, but the sector is improving after the latest FMD crisis, and the legislative proposal spoke of only a minor increase in funding. Concern was also expressed about other budget lines. On fisheries, international relations should be developed by the financing of fisheries agreements, and adequate funding must be maintained. With respect to the CFSP, Parliament is prepared to make funds available for the Community Police Force in Bosnia, but given the responsibility commitments entered into elsewhere after 11 September, insisted that provision should be made for adequate financial resources. Parliament should also be appropriately involved.