Fight against fraud and protection of the Communities' financial interests. Action plan 2001-2203, annual report 2000

2001/2186(COS) - 29/11/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting this resolution by Herbert BÖSCH (PES, A), Parliament is calling for real improvements in efforts to combat fraud. It notes that detected fraud and irregularities on the revenue side now account for 7.5% of traditional own resources, a total of EUR 1.143m. MEPs are concerned that the real scale of the problem is being obscured by underreporting, i.e. cases that are not detected at all and cases that are detected in the Member States but are not reported to OLAF. Parliament wants to strengthen OLAF's investigation activities and calls for closer cooperation between OLAF and the competent national authorities, as well as for effective parliamentary scrutiny of OLAF investigations. It stresses that the recent cases of irregularities and corruption involving EU funds in Poland and Slovakia must be fully investigated. In addition, it requests the European Court of Auditors to submit to it by the start of 2003 at the latest an opinion on each candidate country showing whether the system of financial control in place in these countries is able to work in a way that will allow the shift to decentralised management of Community funds on accession without jeopardising the Community's financial interests. MEPs also call on the Commission to initiate the relevant investigations in suspected cases of fraud and favouritism related to former Commissioners. Finally, Parliament welcomes the Commission's support for the idea of a European Public Prosecutor to be established by mid-2002. MEPs expect the Commission to examine how to set up such an office, whose remit would initially be confined to internal investigations. MEPs also welcome the Commission proposal to amend the EC Treaty at the earliest opportunity, conferring more extensive powers on the European Public Prosecutor.