European Central Bank ECB. 2004 annual report

2005/2048(INI) - 15/06/2005

The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Kurt LAUK (EPP-ED , DE) in response to the European Central Bank's annual report for 2004.

MEPs said that the ECB reacted correctly to economic and financial developments in 2004, while stressing that it should continue to be vigilant as to oil prices, residential property prices and to "the still prevailing excess liquidity". They praised the ECB's policy of "concentrating on its prime objective of maintaining price stability and, thereby, contributing to achieving sustained economic growth." The committee said that the relative economic weakness of the euro area was the result of a lack of structural reforms and the fact that fewer hours were worked in Europe than in other parts of the world.

The report welcomed the fact that the ECB had fully complied with the transparency provisions of the Treaty vis-à-vis the public and Parliament. The committee believed that the monetary dialogue between Parliament and the ECB had been a success. On the other hand, it urged the ECB to consider the possibility of publishing summary minutes, and called for the publication of a regional and cross-border review of trends similar to the US Federal Reserve's 'Beige Book'.

The committee confirmed its view that the ECB should exercise prudential supervision on the banking activities of the European Investment Bank. It also urged the ECB to remain very alert to the counterfeiting of euro notes and coins, as the volume of counterfeits increased by 7.8 % compared with 2003.