2003 discharge: EC general budget, Council

2004/2042(DEC) - 17/03/2005

EP: decision of committee responsible, 1st reading/single reading

The committee adopted the report by Alexander STUBB (EPP-ED, FI) granting discharge to the Council for the 2003 financial year. In its accompanying remarks, the committee welcomed the introduction in the Court of Auditors' 2003 Annual Report of a separate section for the Council. It also praised the fact that improvements in the exchange of information between Council and Parliament had resulted in greater transparency under the discharge procedure. However, it pointed out that there needed to be clearer information about spending on and the management of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) within the Council. The Council was urged to identify CFSP preparatory costs within its budget, as recommended by the Court of Auditors in its 2001 Special Report. MEPs also stressed the need for clarification of the Commission's role in the implementation of CFSP and recommended that clear operational principles and arrangements for this be included in the new interinstitutional agreement on the budget.

The Council was asked to provide the discharge authority with an annual activity report as specified in the Financial Regulation, "as all other institutions have done including the European Parliament".

Lastly, the committee wanted Parliament to be given more time to consider the various discharge recommendations and therefore called for changes to the time-scale for the discharge procedure.