2003 discharge: EC general budget, Court of Auditors

2004/2044(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 European Court of Auditors (ECA) for the 2003 financial year. In its accompanying remarks, the committee pointed out that the investigations into Eurostat by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) had not been finalised and insisted that the ECA should schedule a comprehensive audit of the control and supervisory systems in place once these investigations were completed. It repeated Parliament's earlier recommendation that, following the expansion of the Court, each of its 25 Members should take on special audit responsibility for at least one Commission directorate-general, in order to identify at an early stage, and prevent, the occurrence of undesirable developments such as in the case of Eurostat. While welcoming the Court's arrangements for cooperation with OLAF, it expressed regret that these decisions were taken "rather belatedly".

The report welcomed the steps taken by the ECA on the use of official cars for members, and recognised that "the new provisions are transparent and represent an improvement of the situation". It nevertheless said that the private use of official cars, which the new provisions still allowed, represented "an undisclosed benefit-in-kind" which was inappropriate.

The committee called on the ECA to provide it with a copy of the internal auditor's annual report and stressed that most other institutions trusted the Committee on Budgetary Control to handle internal documents of this nature responsibly.

In its other remarks, the report congratulated the ECA on the network it had built up with audit institutions in the Member States and applicant countries (in preparation for enlargement). Lastly, the Court was asked to evaluate the implications of the new Financial Regulation for its administrative and judicial work in time for its review in 2005/2006.