2003 discharge: EC general budget, Economic and social Committee ESC

2004/2045(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 Economic and Social Committee (ESC) for the 2003 financial year. In its accompanying remarks, the committee welcomed the fact that a new personnel management and payroll system had been put in place and that the ESC had, albeit belatedly, abolished the imprest account for the payment of members' allowances in early 2004. It was critical of the fact that, despite the ESC's public assurance during last year's discharge procedure that there had been no further irregularities regarding the settlement of travel expenses, the Court of Auditors had uncovered cases of excessive travel allowance payments to members. It noted, however, that the ESC, in the meantime, had clarified the travel reimbursement rules.

With regard to the follow-up of the 2002 discharge procedure, the committee noted that an internal auditor's report did not reveal any acts of fraud as far as the Belliard building was concerned and indeed recognised "the value of the building project for the Committees".

The committee called on the ESC to further improve its public profile as a body representing civil society and to use benchmarking means with a view to achieving measurable progress. Lastly, it asked the ESC to evaluate the implications of the new Financial Regulation for its administrative and political work in time for its review in 2005/2006.