2003 discharge: European Agency for reconstruction

2004/2051(DEC) - 16/03/2005

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

The committee adopted the report by Inés AYALA SENDER (PES, ES) and Carl SCHLYTER (Greens /EFA, SE) giving discharge to the Director of the European Agency for Reconstruction for the 2003 financial year.

In its accompanying comments, the committee referred to Parliament's resolution on the 2002 discharge calling inter alia for the Agency, as requested by the Court of Auditors, to clarify the status of funds made available to specialised bodies for the financing of loans in specific fields. The Agency was urged to adopt "appropriate solutions" and to provide a full report on the implementation and efficiency of such loan programmes.

On tendering, the Director was urged in future to suspend the execution of contracts where serious errors, irregularities or fraud have occurred in the award procedure.

However, MEPs also noted the "specific conditions under which the Agency is operating" and acknowledged its "achievements in the fulfilment of its mandate".

The report also made a number of general points addressed to the Commission, the Agencies and the Court of Auditors (ECA):

- before the Commission defines the framework conditions for the use of regulatory agencies, an interinstitutional agreement should spell out common guidelines;

- the Commission should carry out a cross-cutting analysis, on a standard three-year cycle, of the coherence of agency activity with EU policy in general. It should also assess "the broader European added value" of the Agencies' work in their respective fields. Before any decision is taken to propose the creation of a new agency, the need for such an agency should be carefully evaluated, bearing in mind existing structures and the principles of subsidiarity, budgetary austerity and simplification of procedures;

- the Agencies were urged to comply fully with the budgetary principles set out in the Financial Regulation, further strengthen their internal management and control procedures and pay "special attention" to procedures for the award and management of contracts. They should also step up cooperation with each other, avoid duplication of work and develop a comprehensive strategy for making the results of their work available to the general public;

- the ECA and the Agencies were urged to strengthen their cooperation and establish a methodology "that prepares the ground for a positive budget discharge from the start of the process".