2005 discharge: 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th European Development Funds EDF

2006/2169(DEC) - 27/03/2007

The committee adopted the report by Mogens CAMRE (UEN, DK) granting discharge for the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th European Development Funds for 2005. In its accompanying resolution, the committee recalled that, in its previous discharge report, Parliament had called on the Commission to clarify the breakdown of the Commissioners' responsibilities as regards the EDF and external aid. It urged the Commission to reflect on possible ways to simplify the current management structure "in order to minimise the risk of ambiguities as regards responsibilities for the EDF".

The committee reiterated Parliament's previous calls for greater democratic control over EDF funds managed by the European Investment Bank, and stressed that these operations should be subject to a discharge procedure involving Parliament and Council. This issue should be addressed during the forthcoming revision of the EDF financial regulation. The report also repeated Parliament's longstanding position that integration of the EDF into the EU budget would enhance the overall consistency of European development cooperation, ensure greater transparency and effectiveness and facilitate democratic scrutiny.

The report called on the Commission to set more precise objectives, so that progress can be "easily and exactly" measured at each stage of implementation. Meaningful performance indicators should be included in the programming process right from the beginning. On the implementation of EDF funds, the committee noted the recent achievements in reducing outstanding commitments (RAL), which had been a long-standing concern of Parliament in previous discharge exercises, and called on the Commission to pursue its efforts in this area.

The report noted the Commission's tendency to focus on budget support for the beneficiary countries as an ever more important tool for efficient delivery of development policies, but pointed out that the Court of Auditors' control powers in the field of budget support were limited. The Commission was therefore urged to comply with the Court's request that the 2006 financial management report should set out in detail the criteria leading to the Comission's conclusions on the respective country's eligibility for budget support. Lastly, MEPs once more underlined the "great importance" which Parliament attached to the role of national supreme audit institutions (SAI) in the recipient countries.