# 2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2006/2071(DEC) - 27/03/2007

The committee adopted the report by Bart STAES (Greens/EFA, BE) granting discharge to the European Parliament for 2005. In its accompanying remarks, the committee looked at such areas as property policy, Parliament's internal auditing and financial management, the voluntary pension scheme, parliamentary assistants, a "Kyoto-plus Plan" for Parliament and the follow-up of last year's discharge resolution.

On property, the report reiterated the view that repayment on buildings should be set as part of the budgetary strategy and called once more for "building projects with significant financial implications for Parliament's budget" to be subject to the agreement of the Committee on Budgets. Referring to the purchase of the Winston Churchill (WIC), Salvador de Madariaga (SDM) and IPE III buildings in Strasbourg, the committee noted that its informal working group established in preparation for the 2004 discharge had concluded that "some irregularities occurred", and said that further investigation "could be beneficial". The report also called on the Belgian government to honour the agreement whereby the land and land development costs of the site for the D4-D5 buildings in Brussels would be reimbursed to Parliament (as is standard procedure also applying to the other EU institutions).

In other recommendations, the committee urged Parliament's administration to devise a "Kyoto-plus Plan" which would be more ambitious than the current arrangements for managing the environmental impact of Parliament's activities. The plan should include such measures as a further reduction in the use of paper, establishing an integrated energy efficiency plan, a considerable reduction in water consumption and encouraging the use of IT equipment and video conferences in order to reduce travel.

With regard to the Voluntary Pension Fund, the committee insisted that, as the fund is primarily financed by public subsidy, the names of its members should be made public. It also said that, once the Statute for Members of the European Parliament enters into force, members should only be entitled to a pension from the Voluntary Fund as of the age of 63.

Lastly, the committee urged Parliament's newly-elected Bureau to press ahead with the development of a Statute for parliamentary assistants with a view to regulating recruitment and working conditions and also social security and taxation arrangements for assistants.