Basic information

1997/2040(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
EU humanitarian aid: period 1992-1995. Special report 2/97 Court of Auditors **Subject** 6.50 Emergency, food, humanitarian aid, aid to refugees, Emergency Aid Reserve 8.40.05 Court of Auditors	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	CONT Budgetary Control	FABRA VALLÉS Juan Manuel (PPE)	20/05/1997
	Committee for opinion	**Rapporteur for opinion**	**Appointed**
	DEVE Development and Cooperation	CARLOTTI Marie-Arlette (PSE)	19/06/1997
Council of the European Union			

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
20/02/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	RCC0002/1997	Summary
28/05/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
01/12/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
01/12/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0391/1997	
15/01/1998	Debate in Parliament		
16/01/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
02/02/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2040(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)

Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/4/08703

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0391/1997 OJ C 014 19.01.1998, p. 0005	01/12/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0046/1998 OJ C 034 02.02.1998, p. 0189-0194	16/01/1998	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Non-legislative basic document	RCC0002/1997 OJ C 143 12.05.1997, p. 0001	20/02/1997	Summary

EU humanitarian aid: period 1992-1995. Special report 2/97 Court of Auditors

1997/2040(COS) - 20/02/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: submission of the Court of Auditors' Special Report concerning humanitarian aid from the European Union between 1992 and 1995. SUBSTANCE: In 1994 the Court of Auditors carried out an audit with the object of: 1) assessing the clarity of the Union's humanitarian aid policy (its aims and the resources to be utilized), 2) examining the consistency and complementarity of the various instruments being used, 3) establishing whether the Commission was adequately equipped to implement the aid effectively, 4) verifying that appropriate procedures were in place for reporting under satisfactory conditions on the measures implemented and the results obtained. 1) As regards the clarity of the Union's humanitarian aid policy: the Court of Auditors considered that the Commission had financial weight and solid experience of humanitarian aid, but had adopted a piecemeal approach to problems. Until the end of 1995, humanitarian aid (emergency, refugees, rehabilitation, reconstruction, coordination with Member States, cooperation with the United Nations, channelling of the aid, etc.) was not integrated into any overall strategy. There was no one strategic document linking the various humanitarian aid strands more or less closely together. The Court therefore suggested that a general policy document, a kind of 'charter for humanitarian aid', be adopted, which would strengthen the internal cohesion of the measures taken by the various Commission departments and lay the groundwork for greater consistency between the aid measures of the Union and those of its Member States. 2) As regards the consistency and complementarity of the Union's aid measures and those of its Member States, the Court considered that these far from satisfied the provisions of the Treaty and the various Council resolutions on the subject. This lack of consistency might be due to the excessive caution displayed by the national administrations responsible, whose measures on the ground had often failed to have much tangible effect. 3) As regards the appropriateness of the means employed, the Court recalled that ECHO (the European Community Humanitarian Office) had been set up to respond effectively to the ever-growing number of humanitarian crises. The mandate given to it had four main objectives: to concentrate administrative responsibilities for managing the aid, to develop the Union's capacity for intervention, to improve coordination with other public or private donors in the Union, and to facilitate the mobilization of resources in the event of large-scale crises. - As regards concentrating administrative responsibilities, the Court noted that in 1995 ECHO's internal organization was still suffering from being surrounded by departments with which it was difficult to coordinate, and was financing measures which in some cases overlapped with those of other departments. The administrative procedures followed by the various departments of the Commission were not unified, and ECHO was the only department which systematically applied the provisions of the framework partnership agreement (a system of structured collaboration with humanitarian aid partners, based on an agreement laying down detailed provisions on the allocation of ECHO funds and the operational and financial procedures to be adhered to). - As regards developing intervention capacity, the Court observed that the Commission had not been able to staff ECHO with an adequate number of qualified personnel to cope with its tasks properly (particularly staff on the ground responsible for closely monitoring the global plans). - As regards improving coordination with other donors, the Court stated that the practical arrangements for cooperation between the Commission and the United Nations were still fragile and unstable. It suggested that a global agreement be concluded between the Community agency and that of the United Nations to ensure that their relations were consistent, stable and clear. ECHO's framework partnership agreement should also take better account of the operational realities of this type of organization. - Lastly, on

the subject of the mobilization of large-scale resources, the Court said that in a particularly strained situation, the Commission had been able to mobilize more than ECU 2 billion in collaboration with a large number of partners and in a relatively short time (e.g. the Great Lakes crisis). 4) As regards evaluation, the Court said that the Commission had never given the evaluators a mandate to examine the way in which its departments worked. Furthermore, the evaluations were not carried out with a view to an overall appraisal of the implementation of the global plans. It was therefore up to the Commission to set up a mechanism for appraising the real substance and impact of humanitarian aid measures. In conclusion, the Court of Auditors said that the institutional organization of humanitarian aid ought to be reviewed, particularly by laying down the main principles governing European humanitarian aid policy in the broad sense. The Court wondered, in particular, whether the question of sources of finance ought not to be dissociated from that of the implementation of measures. In this respect, it proposed a new division of responsibilities whereby: - the Commission would be responsible for analysing the crises, approving the aid plans and managing the appropriations (budgetary or from the EDFs), - another body, of an operational character, would be responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluating the projects. This office, which would need to be set up specially, would be governed by operating rules laid down by its statutes and would have to be answerable for its tasks to a supervisory board which had genuine power to criticize the management bodies.

EU humanitarian aid: period 1992-1995. Special report 2/97 Court of Auditors

1997/2040(COS) - 16/01/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Juan Manuel FABRA VALLES (PPE, E) on the Court of Auditors' report on humanitarian aid, the European Parliament expressed regret that the Amsterdam Treaty contained no provisions relating to the subject. It likewise regretted the lack of operational coordination in the field between the Union's and the Member States' aid, called for greater coordination of national and European policies, and agreed with the Court of Auditors that this coordination should be strengthened by means of a humanitarian aid charter. However, this should not be restricted to emergency humanitarian aid but should take account of the indissoluble link between emergency aid, rehabilitation and development. Aid policy had hitherto principally focused on individual operations; Parliament called for this approach to be replaced with a more long-term approach and for better management of humanitarian aid. It hoped in particular that: - ECHO would improve its capacity, both among its coordinators in the field and with its regular partner organizations, to arrive promptly at an analysis and assessment of the aid operations to be carried out in a crisis, - ECHO would adopt clearer criteria for its own projects, - the services of the Commission would develop longer-term relationships with key partners (e.g. larger NGOs and the UN) in order to implement together a common overall programme strategy for chronic emergencies (e.g. the African Great Lakes Region, the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, Northern Iraq), - tried and tested partners would be preselected for certain types of measure which had to be carried out swiftly. It called on the Commission to define in collaboration with the Court of Auditors general procedures permitting humanitarian aid to be monitored more fully and to reduce rapidly and permanently existing imbalances in the allocation of Community appropriations for humanitarian aid to NGOs. It considered that complete lists of the contracts concluded with NGOs should be published annually and that the appointment procedure for non-established staff at ECHO should become more transparent. Similarly, Parliament considered that the Commission should draw up a list of experts in technical aid from which to recruit non-established staff in future. Parliament called on the Commission to follow the recommendation of the Court of Auditors and create a central unit to assume responsibility within the Commission for evaluating its aid programmes, including ECHO, MEDA, PHARE and TACIS, to ensure closer monitoring and constant evaluation of measures in progress. Lastly, pointing out that ECHO was expressly established by the Commission in 1991 for a limited seven-year period, it expressed the expectation that the Commission would consult Parliament and the Council at the end of that period about the organization's future.