

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to the Commission statement

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by James E.M. Elles

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on Eurostat

**European Parliament resolution on Eurostat**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 37(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- 1. Regrets the inadequate response so far received to the oral question (O-0067/03) submitted last October and to the 2001 discharge follow-up report; demands that the Commission make a full and complete written evaluation by 31 July 2004 of the circumstances of the Eurostat scandal including all OLAF reports, and in particular the slow response of Commissioners to the warning signals and the poor flow of information within the Commission;
- 2. Considers that the Commission has failed to draw the appropriate conclusions from the Eurostat affair and that, contrary to the undertaking it made at the start of its term of office, it has failed to accept its political responsibility for the matter, either collectively or individually;
- 3. Considers that the Eurostat affair has highlighted serious shortcomings in the Commission's internal control management system and that the Commission's failure to come up with a convincing response undermines the credibility of the system as a whole and affects the Prodi Commission's overall record as far as its main *raison d'être*, namely reform of operating procedures, is concerned;
- 4. Notes that the reports so far received about the Eurostat affair have revealed that:
  - there was no effective political response to public announcements by OLAF about investigations into Eurostat (July 2002) by either the Commissioner responsible for Eurostat or the Commissioner responsible for budgetary control issues;
  - no-one had any oversight of all the pieces of evidence as these slowly gathered (such as the internal audit reports, comments in the Annual Report of the European Court of Auditors, concerns expressed by at least three whistle-blowers, and the several OLAF investigations);
  - the Secretary-General did not pass on any of the information, albeit very vague, from OLAF to anyone with political responsibility;
  - Commission cabinets ignored or dismissed the information that did reach them (such as the email from Mr Sautelet to President Prodi and the reports by whistle-blower Mrs Dorte Schmidt-Brown);
- 5. Believes this demonstrates that no serious consideration seems to have been given to the systems and methods by which the Commissioners themselves would be able to assume their political responsibilities in the fight against fraud and mismanagement;
- 6. Calls on the Commission to make proposals for amending the Code of Conduct of Commissioners so that it makes the political responsibility of Commissioners for their departments a meaningful concept; considers it essential that the President of the

Commission has the measures at his/her disposal to ensure that the discipline of the Code can be applied;

7. Calls for one member of the College to take responsibility, as done in the past, for coordinating the fight against fraud and mismanagement, with specific responsibility *inter alia* for:
  - the Internal Audit Service;
  - the scrutiny, review and oversight of the follow-up of all internal audit reports prepared by the audit capabilities of the directorates-general; and for evaluation reports on the management of programmes;
  - the Audit Progress Committee;
  - relations with OLAF;
  - relations with the European Court of Auditors;
  - liaison with other Commissioners in their work on budgetary control issues;
8. Insists that all Commissioners prioritise the fight against fraud and mismanagement within the Directorates-General for which they have responsibility; intends to take into consideration the commitment of candidate Commissioners to this fight during the hearings on the new Commissioners;
9. Calls therefore for one adviser in all Commissioners' Private Offices to be given the specific responsibility, in addition to other tasks, for advising his/her Commissioner on issues relating to budgetary control within the DGs for which that Commissioner has responsibility and liaising with the office of the member of the College responsible for budgetary control matters;
10. Intends to assess thoroughly all the reports on the Eurostat investigation, promised by OLAF and requested repeatedly by Parliament, most recently in its resolution of 17 December 2003 when it called for OLAF 'to submit its final reports to Parliament as soon as possible, and by 15 January at the latest'; reaffirms its intention to continue to monitor and scrutinise future developments in the ongoing Eurostat investigations and potential legal actions, with a view to proposing further reforms as required;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.