

EU parliamentary fraud alleged

by UPI

BRUSSELS - Europe's anti-fraud investigators have demanded a confidential European Parliament report that one British lawmaker says could land some colleagues in jail. "The report from the auditors highlights massive abuse," said Chris Davies, a British Liberal Democrat in the EU Parliament, about the document, that analyses 167 payments in 2004 and 2005. He said that the findings ought to lead to the imprisonment of several Parliament members, although none were named in the report. "It is clear there are massive breaches of the spirit of the rules, the question is whether they break the letter of the law," he said. Davies alleged some deputies funneled cash for assistants into private companies, a practice he said was akin to "money laundering." Davies said he was "astonished" by what he called 'the scale of the abuse,' the International Herald Tribune reported Friday. Last year, each deputy was entitled to claim about \$8,140 a month to employ a staff. Jaume Duch Guillot, the parliament spokesman, said the report "has not revealed any individual cases of fraud," according to euObserver.com. Alessando Buttice, spokesman for OLAF, the European fraud investigator, said that a formal request to view the report was sent on Thursday.

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