

# 2007 discharge: EU general budget, Council

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the 2<sup>nd</sup> report drawn up by Søren Bo SØNDERGAARD (GUE/NGL, DK) recommending the European Parliament to **grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the Council** in respect of the implementation of the Council's budget for the financial year 2007.

The committee emphasises that it has obtained satisfaction from the Council on the three most important requests it made in its resolution of 23 of April, namely:

1. a meeting on 24 September 2009 of the Chairman, the rapporteur and co-ordinators of Parliament's competent committee with representatives of the Swedish Presidency and of the General Secretariat of the Council to discuss the Council's budget implementation for 2007;
2. written answers to Parliament's questions concerning the Council's budget implementation for 2007 (paragraph 22 of the resolution);
3. publication on the Council's website of relevant documents concerning the Council's budget implementation, including the answers to Parliament's specific questions.

MEPs consider that Parliament has carried out its duty to guarantee maximum possible transparency and accountability concerning the use of EU taxpayers' money.

MEPs nevertheless invite:

- the Council to continue to further improve cooperation with Parliament's competent committees on the basis of its recent practice;
- the institutions to formulate and include in the IIA an annex specifically dealing with the discharge procedure for the Council;
- Parliament's competent committee, in the context of the next discharge procedure for the Council, to verify progress on the following matters: (i) the closing of all its extra-budgetary accounts in accordance with the recommendations of its internal auditor; (ii) the improvement of the verification of invoices following its internal auditor's recommendations; (iii) the publication of all administrative decisions when they are used as the legal basis for budget items; (iv) the transmission to Parliament and its competent committee of its annual activity report, required to be drawn up by the Financial Regulation, in accordance with the practice now adopted by all other EU institutions; (v) a full explanation of the need to transfer money from one item to another within its budget; (vi) the provision of written answers to relevant questions asked by its competent committee and its rapporteur; (vii) the availability and willingness of the Council to provide an oral explanation to its competent committee, on the basis of these written answers, should they require further clarification.

MEPs renew their request made in Parliament's resolution of 23 April 2009 to the European Court of Auditors to pay special attention, in its forthcoming Annual Reports, to the Council's budget implementation.