

2010 discharge: EU general budget, Section II - Council

2011/2203(DEC) - 02/10/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the second reading report of Inés AYALA SENDER (S&D, ES) on the Council discharge for the financial year 2010 which called on the European Parliament **to refuse the Secretary-General of the Council the discharge for the implementation of the Council budget**. In May 2012, Parliament previously postponed its decision on granting the discharge for the implementation of the Council budget, essentially because of **lack of transparency** on the part of the Council (as reported in the summary dated 10/05/2012).

In its draft resolution, the parliamentary committee made a series of points supporting its agreed position:

- **inter-institutional cooperation:** underlines that in its 2010 annual report, the Court of Auditors criticised the financing of the Residence Palace building project because of the advance payments made, Members reminded the Court of Auditors of Parliament's request to carry out an in-depth assessment of supervisory and control systems in the Council, similar to the assessments it carried out in relation to other institutions and organs of the Union. Members consider that its fulfilment depends entirely on an unhindered inter-institutional cooperation between the Council and the Parliament;
- **pending issues:** once again, Parliament regrets the continual difficulties encountered with the Council in the discharge procedures for the 2007, 2008 and 2009 financial years and point out that **Parliament refused** to grant the Secretary-General of the Council [discharge](#) for implementation of the Council budget for the financial year 2009 for reasons linked to lack of information. Parliament also noted that, in its resolution with observations forming an integral part of the above-mentioned decision of 10 May 2012, Members asked 26 supplementary questions linked to the discharge procedure to which Council refused to respond. They deplore the fact that the attitude of the **Council obstructs democratic control as well as transparency and accountability vis-à-vis Union taxpayers;**
- **emphasising the right of Parliament to grant discharge:** Members noted the right of Parliament to grant discharge in accordance with Treaty Articles (Articles 316, 317 and 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)) which must be interpreted in the light of their context and their purpose: which is to submit the implementation of the **entire budget of the European Union to parliamentary control and scrutiny without exception**, and to **grant discharge autonomously**, not only in respect of the section of the budget implemented by the Commission, but also in respect of the sections of the budget implemented by the other institutions. In this respect, Members are of the opinion that, in any event, **an assessment must be carried out of the Council's management as an institution of the Union during the financial year under examination, thereby upholding Parliament's prerogatives**, in particular, the assurance of democratic accountability towards Union citizens. They propose that the discharge is based on a series of written documents submitted by the various institutions whilst deploring that, during negotiations on a revised Financial Regulation, **no agreement could be reached on ways in which the discharge procedure could be improved**. Members concluded by welcoming the organisation by the Committee on Budgetary Control of a seminar on the different roles played by Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure covering the main points of the procedure (in particular, mutual sincere cooperation between the two institutions).