

# 2010 discharge: EU general budget, Section II - Council

2011/2203(DEC) - 23/10/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a decision whereby it **refuses to grant the Secretary-General of the Council the discharge for the implementation of the Council budget for the 2010 financial year.**

To recap, in May 2012, Parliament had 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).

Parliament recalls, above all, that ‘citizens have the right to know how their taxes are being spent and how the power entrusted to political bodies is handled’. **As a result, it considers that the Council, as an institution of the Union, should be subject to democratic accountability towards Union citizens as far as the implementation of Union funds is concerned.**

In its resolution, Parliament made a series of points supporting its agreed position:

- **inter-institutional cooperation:** recalling the main points of the opinion of the Court of Auditors on the Council in its statement of assurance for 2010 (in particular, the financing of the Residence Palace building project because of the advance payments made), Parliament reminds the Court of Auditors of its 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 bodies of the Union. Parliament considers 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. It deplores the fact that the attitude of the **Council obstructs democratic control as well as transparency and accountability vis-à-vis the Union’s taxpayers;**
- **emphasising Parliament’s right to grant discharge:** Parliament recalls the Treaty articles (Articles 316, 317 and 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)) on which its right to grant discharge is founded which must be interpreted in the light of their context and their purpose i.e. **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 context, Parliament considers 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.** It proposes a series of guidelines to facilitate the discharge in regard to the Council, whilst regretting that, during negotiations on a revised Financial Regulation, **no agreement could be reached on ways in which the discharge procedure could be improved.**

Lastly, the resolution proposes the organisation, within the Committee on Budgetary Control, of a seminar on the different roles played by Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure (in particular,

mutual sincere cooperation between the two institutions). In particular, the resolution specifies the documents that must be made available in the context of the discharge procedure.