# 2013 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2014/2084(DEC) - 29/04/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 568 votes to 102, with 25 abstentions, a decision to **give discharge** to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2013.

In its resolution accompanying the discharge decision, adopted by 584 votes to 84, with 12 abstentions, Parliament welcomed the fact that the Court of Auditors observed that **no significant weaknesses** had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the European Ombudsman. The payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2013 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were **free from material error**.

**Budgetary and financial management:** Parliament welcomed the 2013 results; the Ombudsman's budget rose, in 2013, to EUR 9 731 371. Of the total appropriations, 98.20% were committed and 91.82% paid with a utilisation rate of **98.20%** (95.88% in 2012).

**Ombudsman’s actions:** Members called for the continued improvements of the **financial planning** over the next financial years. They endorsed the Ombudsman's Annual Management Plan for 2013 including a Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) scoreboard to measure the office's performance in achieving its objectives. The Ombudsman is encouraged to continue to monitor the management of allowances and improve its performance levels.

In 2013, the Ombudsman largely met the aim of **closing 70% of cases** in less than a year. However, although the proportion of inquiries closed within 18 months has increased from 79% to 81%, it was still below the 90% target set by the Ombudsman. Members hoped that this target would be reached in 2014.

Parliament went on to make a **series of observations** on the Ombudsman’s daily management and asked for:

- information on the unused rate of the **interpretation services**;
- strengthening cooperation with the other institutions to work out a uniform method of presenting **translation costs**;
- a reduction in the **high level of spending on ‘away days’**, conferences and similar events for staff at the Ombudsman’s office in 2013, which was noticeably higher than it was in the other institutions;
- clarification on the Ombudsman’s **buildings policy**;
- inclusion in its annual activity reports, in compliance with the existing rules on **confidentiality and data protection**, the results and consequences of closed OLAF cases, where the institution or any of the individuals working for it were the subject of the investigation;
- the introduction of a **procedure** to assess the possible impact of certain publications in advance, with a view to publishing them, along with an explanatory report, so as to avoid them being used in a biased way.

Lastly, whilst welcoming the fact that a woman had been elected as European Ombudsman, Parliament called for the introduction of an **equal opportunities plan** specifically geared towards management posts.