2014 discharge: EU general budget, European Data Protection Supervisor

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PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2014, as part of the 2014 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the EU Institutions: **European Data Protection Supervisor**.

Legal reminder: the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the year 2014 have been prepared on the basis of the information presented by the institutions and bodies under Article 148(2) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union.

(1) Purpose: the document helps to bring insight into the EU budget mechanism and **the way in which the budget has been managed and spent in 2014**, including the different expenses of the European institutions. It should be recalled that only the Commission budget contains administrative appropriations and operating appropriations. **The other Institutions have only administrative appropriations.**

The document also presents the different financial actors involved in the budget process (accounting officers, internal officers and authorising officers) and recalls their respective roles in the context of the tasks of sound financial management.

Amongst the other legal elements relating to the implementation of the EU budget presented in this document, the paper focuses on the following issues:

- accounting principles applicable to the management of EU spending (business continuity, consistency of accounting methods, comparability of information ...);
- consolidation methods of figures for all major controlled entities (the consolidated financial statements of the EU comprise all significant controlled entities –institutions, organisations and agencies);
- the recognition of financial assets in the EU (tangible and intangible assets, financial assets and other miscellaneous investments);
- the way in which EU public expenditure is committed and spent, including pre-financing (cash advances intended for the benefit of an EU organ);
- the means of recovery following irregularities detected;
- the performance indicators in the framework of the financial implementation;
- the modus operandi of the accounting system;
- the audit process followed by the European Parliament's granting of the discharge.

Discharge procedure: the final control is the discharge of the budget for a given financial year. The discharge represents the **political aspect of the external control of budget implementation** and is the **decision by which the European Parliament, acting on a Council recommendation, "releases" the Commission from its responsibility for management of a given budget** by marking the end of that budget's existence. When granting discharge, Parliament may make observations which it considers important and often recommends the Commission and the other institutions to **take actions concerning these matters**.

The document also details specific expenditure of the institutions, in particular: (i) pensions of former Members and officials of institutions; (ii) joint sickness insurance scheme and (iii) buildings.

The document also presents a series of tables and detailed technical indicators on (i) the balance sheet; (ii) the economic outturn account; (iii) cashflow tables; (iv) technical annexes concerning the financial statements.

(2) Implementation of the EDPS's appropriations for the financial year 2014: the document comprises a series of detailed annexes, the most important concerning the implementation of the budget. **As regards the EDPS's expenditure**, the information is drawn from the Budgetary and Financial Management Report 2014. The appropriations available for 2014 amounted to 9 million with 82.2% of these committed.

The implementation of the EDPS's budget in 2014 was marked by the following:

- **Supervision**: the EDPS monitors the processing of personal data in the EU administration and ensures compliance with the data protection rules. The supervisory tasks range from prior checking processing operations likely to present specific risks, to handling complaints and conducting enquiries.
- **Consultation**: the EDPS advises the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council on proposals for new legislation and a wide range of other issues having an impact on data protection.
- **Cooperation**: the EDPS cooperates with other data protection authorities in order to promote consistent data protection throughout Europe.

The EDPS regularly expresses its positions in different types of publications such as policy and strategy documents, particularly as regards its advisory role, the relationship between access to documents and data protection and the role of data protection officers (DPOs).

In its **annual reports**, the EDPS presents the main results and developments which marked the previous year. The reports cover the three main areas of activity of the Supervisor (supervision, consultation and cooperation) and developments in the areas of communication, administrative, budgetary and human resources.

The EDPS and the Assistant EDSP also participate in conferences and meetings. Information brochures were handed out to inform the public on the role of the EDPS and the rights of individuals, as well as fact sheets.

The 2014 Annual Report reviews the activities of the European Data Protection Supervisor and our focus on increasing the capacity of EU bodies for accountable data processing and for more proactive integration of data protection rules and principles in policy making.