2013 discharge: EU general budget, European Commission and executive agencies

2014/2075(DEC) - 29/04/2015 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Commission for the financial year 2013.

NON LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/1616 of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III — Commission and executive agencies.

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants discharge to the Commission for the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2013.

The Decision runs in parallel to Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/1623 on the closure of the accounts of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013.

In its resolution attached to the Decision on discharge, the European Parliament Welcomes the fact that the annual accounts of the Union for the financial year 2013 present fairly, and in all material respects, the position of the Union as of 31 December 2013 and notes with satisfaction that revenue underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013 is legal and regular in all material respects.

However, Parliament regretted the fact that payments are affected by a most likely error rate of **4.7%,** being significantly above the 2% threshold for certain payments.

At the same time, Parliament underlined that the **Commission has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the Union budget** while Member States, especially under **shared management of funds**, have a special political and financial responsibility in implementing the Union budget. Accordingly, Member States should act strictly in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and should not undermine their own responsibility in managing Union funds.

Pressure on the budget: Parliament was concerned by the fact that due to the unacceptable position of the Council during the negotiations of the annual Union budget and despite the high level of payments, the accounts show that **outstanding financial commitments** and other liabilities continued to grow in 2013 and that at the year end, they stood at **EUR 322 billion**, a figure placing a question mark over the legality of the budget.

Parliament stressed that in times of economic crisis, financial resources are scarce and required a shift from spending to a **performance culture**.

Members made a series of other observations in the resolution attached to the Decision on discharge (please see the summary of 29 April 2015).

NB. Parliament also granted discharge to the directors of the following executive agencies on their budget implementation for 2013: Education, Audiovisual and Culture, Competiveness and Innovation, Health and Consumers, European Research Council, Research and Innovation and Networks.