2015 discharge: EU general budget, European Council and Council

2016/2153(DEC) - 25/10/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 638 votes to 17, with 4 abstentions, to refuse to grant the Secretary-General of the Council discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and of the Council for the financial year 2015.

In a resolution annexed to the decision to refuse discharge, Parliament regretted that the Council has not responded to Parliament's remarks in its resolution of 27 April 2017 by which it postponed its decision granting discharge.

As regards the pending issues, Members stressed the following issues:

- the budget of the European Council and the Council have **not yet been separated** as recommended by Parliament;
- reports on the progress of **real estate projects** as well as a detailed breakdown of the expenditure incurred so far and information on the costs of delays in the completion of the Europa building;
- the Council's **whistleblowing rules** continue to be publicly unavailable and that the Council has not yet joined the Union transparency register;
- despite improvements made by the Council with regard to internal policies, the Council still has not joined the Union's **transparency register**;
- the Council is urged to develop detailed **anti-corruption guidelines** and independent policies within its structures.

Overall, Parliament regretted the **difficulties repeatedly encountered in the discharge procedures** to date, which were due to a **lack of cooperation** from the Council. It pointed out that the refusal to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the Council in relation to the financial years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 has not led to consequences of any kind. It insisted that an effective budgetary control exercise requires the cooperation of Parliament and the Council.

Members confirmed that **Parliament is unable to make an informed decision on granting discharge**. They reminded the Council of the Commission's view that all institutions should be fully part of the follow-up process to the observations made by Parliament in the discharge exercise and that all institutions should cooperate to ensure the smooth functioning of the discharge procedure. They regretted that the Council continues to **fail to provide answers to Parliament's questions**.

According to Members, the lack of cooperation of the European Council and the Council with the discharge authority is a **negative sign** to the citizens of the Union.