2016 discharge: EU general budget, European Council and Council

2017/2138(DEC) - 24/10/2018 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the Council for the 2016 financial year.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2018/2071 of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Section II - European Council and Council.

CONTENT: the European Parliament has refused to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the Council in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and the Council for the 2016 financial year.

The decision is accompanied by a resolution of the European Parliament containing the observations which form an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the 2016 financial year.

In its resolution, Parliament regretted that the Council had not responded to the observations made by Parliament in its resolution of 18 April 2018 on the discharge, thus following the trend observed in previous years. It regretted that no action had been taken on Parliament's recommendations and that no reason or explanation had been provided in that regard.

Outstanding issues

Parliament regretted that its request that the budget of the European Council and the Council be separate had not been taken into account. It also invited the Council to:

- communicate as soon as possible its reply to the European Ombudsman's strategic report on the transparency of the legislative procedure to the Council;

- provide detailed information on its building policy in its annual financial report;

- report on the progress of building projects and a detailed breakdown of expenditures incurred to date;

- present an overview of human resources broken down by category, grade, gender, nationality and training;

- engage in fruitful negotiations with the result that the Council joins the register;

- specify the measures it has taken to overcome the irregular nomination of a judge to the Court of Justice of the European Union;

- carry out impact assessments of the consequences of Brexit and inform Parliament of the conclusions by the end of the 2018 financial year.

State of play

Parliament welcomed the informal exchanges between Parliament and the Council to discuss solutions to the current impasse in the discharge procedure. It invited the Council to react quickly to the latest proposals from the Committee on Budgetary Control, so that the new arrangements for the discharge exercise may be applied as soon as possible.

Parliament also deplored the systematic difficulties encountered so far in the discharge procedures due to a lack of cooperation from the Council. It stressed that the Council's expenditure must be audited in the same way as that of the other institutions and that the fundamental elements of this audit are set out in its discharge resolutions for the past financial years.