# 2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Council and Council

2018/2168(DEC) - 27/12/2019 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the Council for the 2017 financial year.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2019/2224 of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017, 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 2017 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 2017 financial year.

In its resolution, Parliament recalled the difficulties repeatedly encountered in the Council discharge procedures to date due to the lack of cooperation from the Council which led Parliament to refuse to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the Council in relation to the financial years 2009 to 2016 and to postpone its decision on discharge in March 2019 for the financial year 2017.

***Outstanding issues***

Parliament expressed regret that the request to separate the budget of the European Council and the Council into one budget for each institution, made by Parliament in previous discharge resolutions, has not been considered. It insisted on this separation that will contribute to increased transparency in the financial management of both institutions and improve their accountability and expenditure efficiency.

It also reiterated its concern at the very high level of appropriations carried over from 2017 to 2018, in particular for furniture, technical equipment, transport and IT systems. It also deplored the Council's failure to give sufficient information on real estate policy.

Parliament deplored the Council's lack of participation in the transparency register. The Council should continue discussions on the technical aspects of the package of instruments regarding the transparency register in order to achieve a political agreement between the three institutions as soon as possible, given that enhanced transparency within in the European institutions will increase public confidence in the Union.

Moreover, concern was expressed about reports in the European media about corporate sponsorship of Member States hosting the EU Presidency. It proposed that the Council adopt guidelines to promote financial transparency and independence of Presidencies, and recommended that the Council envisage budgetisation of the Presidencies.

***State of play***

Parliament is encouraged by the fact that the Council considers it necessary to address the discharge procedure and is open to arriving at an agreement with Parliament on how to cooperate in this regard as rapidly as possible.