# 2018 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Justice

2019/2058(DEC) - 14/05/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 605 votes to 76, with 10 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the Registrar of the Court of Justice in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court of Justice of the European Union for the financial year 2018.

In the resolution accompanying its discharge decision (adopted by 604 votes in favour, 78 against and 11 abstentions), the European Parliament made a series of observations:

***Budgetary and financial management***

In its Annual Report 2018, the Court of Auditors identified no significant weaknesses with respect to the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). It concluded that the payments for the year ended 31 December 2018 for administrative and other expenditure of the ECJ were, overall, free from material error and that the supervisory and control systems examined were effective.

In 2018, the budget of the ECJ amounted to EUR 410 025 089 compared to EUR 399 344 000 in 2017, which represents an increase of 2.67%, an overall implementation rate of 99.18% (compared to 98.69% in 2017).

Parliament welcomed the sound financial management and the overall prudence shown by the ECJ in the financial year 2018, noting the efforts made by the ECJ to avoid significant discrepancies between commitments (99.18%) and payments (94.04%). The ECJ is called upon to continue its efforts to prepare sound budget estimates.

***Cases brought before the Court of Justice***

Members recognised the CJEU's careful planning and monitoring to ensure a smooth continuity of judicial activity: in 2018, the average duration of proceedings in 2018 at the Court of Justice was 15.7 months (compared to 16.4 months in 2017) and at the General Court was 20 months (compared to 20.6 months in 2015 and 16 months in 2017). The CJEU is encouraged to continue its efforts to shorten the duration of proceedings whenever possible.

Parliament welcomed the fact that the two courts comprising the CJEU closed 1769 cases in 2018, which represents record productivity. This confirms a general trend of a strong increase in judicial activity over the period 2012-2018.

In view of the growing increase in the number of cases, the CJEU could be more efficient if it showed more flexibility in the allocation of its resources, in particular with regard to the existing legal secretaires. The CJEU is invited to report on the concrete measures it has taken.

***Other observations***

The Court was invited, *inter alia*, to:

- address the continuing imbalance in the number of women judges, both in the Court of Justice and in the General Court;

- closely monitor the geographical imbalance among the staff, in particular at management level;

- publish without delay strict rules on internal procedures concerning the practice of revolving doors for senior management staff;

- assess whether the workload is properly distributed between teams and among staff members;

- publish on an annual basis a table with detailed data on its interinstitutional cooperation agreements;

- publish more detailed information on the external activities of its members, as well as the CVs and declarations of interests of all its members on its website;

- broadcast its public hearings and to make recordings available online;

- improve the control system for the use of official cars, so as to avoid situations in which drivers are going to members' home countries without having the member on board.

In general, Parliament highlighted the work achieved in recent years on issues such as performance-based budgeting, the ethical framework and the many related rules and procedures, enhanced communication activities and the increasing number of measures to improve transparency. It underlined the importance of collaboration and of sharing of experience among Union institutions and bodies and suggested that an analysis be made of the possibility of formalised networking activities in different domains in order to share best practises and to develop common solutions.