2020 discharge: General budget of the EU - Court of Justice

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PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2020, as part of the 2020 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the EU Institutions: European Court of Justice

The consolidated annual accounts of the EU provide financial information on the activities of the institutions, agencies and other bodies of the EU from an accrual accounting and budgetary perspective. They are prepared according to the highest available international public sector standards.

The discharge is a Parliament decision that reflects its conclusions at the end of a process, the discharge procedure, on the way the Commission (and other institutions and bodies) has carried out its task of implementing the EU budget.

The decision is based in particular on the European Court of Auditors reports, in particular its annual report, in which the Court provides a Statement of Assurance (DAS) on the legality and regularity of transactions (payments and commitments).

Implementation of the Court of Justice's appropriations for the financial year 2020

The expenditure appropriations entered in the Court's budget for the financial year 2020 amounted to **EUR 436 637 500**.

The implementation of the budget for the financial year 2020 amounts to **EUR 432 086 272** and reflects an increased rate of use of the final appropriations of 99%, which is slightly higher than in 2019 (98.7%).

Almost 75% of the appropriations used by the Court in 2020 are dedicated to the expenditure of Members and staff, with almost all of the remaining balance relating to expenditure on infrastructure, in particular in the areas of buildings and IT.

The Court's activities in 2020 were marked by:

- the impact of the Covid-19 health crisis that significantly influenced all of the Institution's activity, both jurisdictional and administrative;

- lockdown measures and restrictions had a certain impact on social and economic activity and on that of the courts of the Member States, leading to a drop in the number of cases lodged with **1 582 cases** brought overall before the two courts of the European Union, that figure is lower than the record number of cases seen in the previous year (1 905) but similar to the figures for 2018 (1 683) and 2017 (1 656);

- the average length of proceedings for cases completed before both courts stands at **15.4 months**, the lowest level ever achieved, which demonstrates the constant pursuit of the objective of improving efficiency in the management of proceedings;

- additional costs were noted such as the purchase of IT equipment and services due to the generalised use of homeworking for staff, and for the purchase of disinfection and personal protective equipment for

Members and staff of the Court that are called into the buildings, for the representatives of parties, and for visitors;

- however, **savings** were made on several budget lines, in particular on those relating to translation and freelance interpretation, professional training, missions, cleaning and security and surveillance of the buildings, furniture and to protocol-related activities;

- an estimated saving of EUR 5.5 million was made regarding the adjustment of salaries.