2020 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

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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 Ombudsman

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 Ombudsman's appropriations for the financial year 2020

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Implementation of the Ombudsman's appropriations for the financial year 2020

The appropriations available in the Ombudsman's budget for 2020 amounted to **EUR 12 348 231** and included 69 establishment plan posts.

- **Title 1** (Expenditure relating to persons working for the institution) amounted to EUR 10 050 131.

- **Title 2** (Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure) amounted to EUR 1 899 200.

- **Title 3** (Expenditure resulting from special functions carried out by the institution) amounted to EUR 398 900.

The implementation rate (including appropriations carried over from 2020 to 2021) is **94.9%** (compared to 92.3% in 2019). Of the total appropriations, 93.2% were paid.

The amount of appropriations carried over from 2020 to 2021 is EUR 215 896, i.e. 1.7% of the 2020 budget (compared to EUR 323 410 carried over from 2019 to 2020, i.e. 2.8% of the 2019 budget).

Furthermore, 74.31% of the appropriations carried over to 2020 from 2019 were used.

The Ombudsman's activities in 2020 were marked by:

- its **25th anniversary**. Since being set up in 1995, the Office has handled over 57 000 complaints, conducted more than 7 300 inquiries and raised ethical and accountability standards across a range of areas and EU institutions;

- the adoption of a new Strategy 'Towards 2024';

- several inquiries and initiatives into the COVID-19 response by the EU administration;

- the successful transition to 100% teleworking for all staff and paperless procedures in response to the COVID-19 crisis;

- the opening of an inquiry into how the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) deals with alleged breaches of fundamental rights;

- the opening of **365 new inquiries** on the basis of complaints and the **closing of 392 complaint-based inquiries**;

- several important inquiries related to the transparency of decision making around environmental issues.