2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Parliament

2023/2130(DEC) - 01/03/2024 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Andrey NOVAKOV (EPP, BG) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section I – European Parliament.

The committee called on the European Parliament to **grant its President discharge** in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Parliament for the financial year 2022.

Parliament's budgetary and financial management

Members noted that Parliament's final appropriations for 2022 totalled **EUR 2 161 million**, or 19.55 % of Heading 7 of the Multiannual Financial Framework set aside for the 2022 administrative expenditure of the Union institutions as a whole, representing **a 4.76 % increase** compared to the 2021 budget.

The total revenue entered in the accounts as of 31 December 2022 was EUR 250 473 772 (compared to EUR 215 332 108 in 2021); notes that assigned revenue made available in 2022 amounted to EUR 61 267 620 (compared to EUR 37 150 962 in 2021).

Five chapters accounted for 76.5 % of total commitments: Chapter 10 'Members of the institution'; Chapter 12 'Officials and temporary staff'; Chapter 14 'Other staff and external services'; Chapter 20 'Buildings and associated costs'; and Chapter 42 'Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance'.

Members noted that the COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to have generated a moderate surplus of EUR 16 417 325 and that is necessary to reinforce other budget lines by a total of EUR 7 549 000.

2022 was a year of transition for the Union institutions, including Parliament, measures introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were discontinued by June 2022. Members welcomed the efforts of all DGs and the Secretary-General to put the necessary tools in place to resume parliamentary work so that it functions in the same way as it did before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parliament's administration has put considerable effort into the implementation of the budget with a view to meeting urgent needs arising from the crisis situation due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the exceptionally high level of inflation.

The final appropriations for the various Directorates-General in 2022 were as follows:

- **Directorate-General for the Presidency**: EUR 1 275 565, i.e. 1% of Parliament's budget; a total amount of EUR 1 169 055.78 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Communication**: EUR 121 235 650, i.e. 5.6% of Parliament's budget; a total amount of EUR 121 146 177 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Personnel**: EUR 1 090 141 584, i.e. 50.4% of Parliament's budget; a total amount of EUR 1 087 939 413 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics**: EUR 271 191 093, representing 12.5% of Parliament's budget; a total of EUR 269 189 287 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Translation**: EUR 17 105 500, representing 0.8% of Parliament's budget; a total of EUR 16 834 967 has been committed;

- **Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences**: EUR 79 569 347, representing 3.7% of Parliament's budget; a total of EUR 79 282 501 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Finance**: EUR 396 723 134, representing 18.4% of Parliament's budget; a total of EUR 395 647 243 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support**: EUR 134 808 679, representing 6.2% of Parliament's budget; a total of EUR 134 439 573 was committed;

- **Directorate-General for Security and Protection**: EUR 29 507 334, representing 1.4% of Parliament's budget; a total of EUR 28 370 796 was committed.

Overall, Members welcomed the high use of appropriations.

Horizontal issues

Harassment

Members welcomed Parliament’s zero tolerance policy on harassment and the awareness-raising campaigns carried out. In 2022, 56 MEPs participated in the training session. The report noted that members of staff and APAs had participated in anti-harassment training courses.

Whistleblowers

It is recalled that staff members of the Union institutions have an obligation to report any information pointing to corruption, fraud and other serious irregularities that they discover in the line of duty. Parliament recorded one case of whistleblowing in 2022.

Members welcomed the ongoing work in 2022 to update the Internal Rules Implementing Article 22(c) of the Staff Regulations of 4 December 2015 with more comprehensive and detailed internal rules. They welcome that a Bureau decision regarding the internal rules on whistleblowing was adopted on 20 November 2023 and applies from 1 December 2023, including provisions for the protection of whistleblowers, transmission of evidence to OLAF and, if appropriate, EPPO as well as deadlines for the handling of complaints.

Voluntary Pension Fund (VPF)

The actuarial deficit of the Voluntary Pension Fund (VPF) on 31 December 2021 amounted to EUR 379 million (compared to EUR 371.4 million on 31 December 2020). Members welcomes the amendments made by Parliament’s Bureau to Article 76 of the IMMS in relation to the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Scheme, which entered into force on 1 July 2023, aiming to reduce future pension obligations from EUR 362.7 million to an estimated EUR 139 million, and the actuarial deficit of the fund from EUR 310 million to an estimated EUR 86 million. They welcomed the latest decisions taken by the Bureau.

The report asked the administration and the Bureau to explore every legal option that would guarantee that no taxpayer money is used for any future bail-out of the VPF’s investment portfolio.

European political parties and European political foundations

In 2022, the Authority gave European political parties and European political foundations the right to be heard as well as the opportunity for corrective measures in 9 cases. The relevant corrective measures were immediately implemented by the European political parties and foundations concerned in all these cases.

The report noted with concern that the Authority reports that it is facing constrained human resources. It highlights that this issue is expected to become more pressing due to the evolving challenges in the run-up to the 2024 European elections, including, in particular ,the need to protect democratic integrity against novel forms of foreign interference.