

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - Court of Justice of the European Union

2023/2132(DEC) - 07/03/2024 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Luke Ming FLANAGAN (The Left, IE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section IV – Court of Justice of the European Union.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Registrar of the Court of Justice discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court of Justice of the European Union for the financial year 2022.

Budgetary and financial management

The report noted that the overall budget allocated for the CJEU for 2022 amounted to EUR 467 900 000, an increase from EUR 444 049 000 in 2021 and in 2020, equivalent to an increase of 5.4 % from 2021 to 2022, and that 79 % of the budget in 2022 was used for its members and staff, 14 % for buildings, 6 % for IT and 1 % for other expenditure.

Members noted that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in various ways created budgetary pressures for the CJEU, including through rising inflation and salary adjustments, strongly increasing energy costs and costs for a number of goods and services.

Internal management, performance and internal control

In 2022, for the Court of Justice, 68 % of new cases were references for preliminary rulings, 24 % were appeals against decisions of the General Court, and 4 % were actions against Member States for failure to fulfil obligations. In addition, the report stated that, in 2022, for the General Court, 46 % of new cases concerned actions for annulment of acts of Union institutions, 30 % concerned actions relating to intellectual property, and 7 % concerned disputes between institutions of the Union and their staff.

The number of cases brought before the two courts in 2022 is comparable to that of the previous year (1 710 cases in 2022 as compared to 1 720 in 2021). The report noted that, together, the Court of Justice and the General Court were able to complete 1 666 cases in 2022, compared to 1 723 in 2021, which corresponds to the average in recent years (1 692 cases per year between 2018 and 2021). The total number of pending cases is increasing, with 2 585 cases pending in 2022 compared to 2 541 in 2021.

Human resources

The report noted with concern that the Court of Justice and the General Court continue to have a very unbalanced gender composition and that of the eight new Judges taking office in the General Court in 2022, five were men and three were women. There is also an overrepresentation of Union nationalities represented on the staff of the CJEU with French nationals accounting for 22 % of overall staff.

Ethical framework and transparency

Members continue to appreciate the reforms made in 2021 concerning the members of the Court of Justice and of the General Court concerning their code of conduct and the declarations of interest which together with the new requirements for the curriculum vitae of the members represents an improvement in the

transparency of the CJEU. They are, nevertheless, of the opinion that the validity and usefulness of the declarations of interest could be improved through some kind of verification and quality control.

The Court is called on to finalise and adopt a new code of conduct with no delay, in line with requests from previous discharge cycles.

Interinstitutional cooperation

Members welcomed that the CJEU has a wide range of service level agreements with other Union institutions which helps reduce costs for the institutions involved and ensures that similar procedures, techniques and work flows are used across the institutions. They noted with appreciation that the CJEU, together with all other Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, have entered into a joint procurement for the supply of accident insurance.

The report noted enhanced cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).

Communication

Lastly, the report noted that, in 2022, the budget for communications, covering content preparation and printing of internal and external publications was EUR 527 500, equivalent to an increase of 3.3 % from 2021.

Regarding transparency, Members noted with appreciation that, in 2022, the CJEU started a streaming service of the case hearings assigned to the Grand Chamber, providing the public with an opportunity to have a better understanding of how the CJEU works. The CJEU is encouraged to widen this initiative to ensure more transparency.