# Discharge 2023: EU general budget – European Council and Council

2024/2021(DEC) - 22/10/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided, by 441 votes to 125, with 73 abstentions, to refuse to grant the Secretary-General of the Council discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and of the Council for the financial year 2023.

***State of play***

Parliament deeply regrets that since 2009, and again for the financial year 2023, Council continues to refuse to cooperate with Parliament on the discharge procedure, preventing Parliament from taking an informed decision based on a serious and thorough scrutiny of the implementation of the Council's budget and thereby compelling Parliament to refuse discharge. The resolution stressed that the current situation must be improved through better interinstitutional cooperation within the existing framework of the Treaties. It should be noted that in May 2025, during his intervention in Parliament's plenary, the Representative of the Presidency of the Council expressed the latter's willingness 'to engage in a meaningful and pragmatic cooperation between our institutions' when it comes to discharge in relation to the European Council and Council section of the Union budget.

The Council is therefore called on to resume negotiations with Parliament at the highest level as soon as possible, involving the Secretary-Generals and the Presidents of both institutions, in order to **break the deadlock** and find a solution while respecting the respective roles of Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure and ensuring transparency and proper democratic control of budget implementation.

***Separate budget***

Once again, Parliament reiterated its regret that the budget of the European Council and the Council has not been divided into two clearly separated budgets as recommended by Parliament in previous discharge resolutions in order to improve transparency and accountability.

***Improved decision-making***

While welcoming the decision to adopt conclusions supported by 26 Member States on the Union's continued and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, Parliament regretted that such a course was necessary due to persistent vetoes. It called for the development of alternative mechanisms to **bypass vetoes in urgent matters**, pending treaty changes to improve decision-making efficiency and unity within the European Council. Members undermined that the Union's budget for 2023 has already mobilised substantial resources to support Ukraine and stressed the importance of ensuring that future budgetary decisions reflect this strategic commitment.

Parliament strongly regretted the Hungarian government's obstructive stance within the European Council and noted that ongoing political deadlocks and insufficient progress on transparency reforms continue to undermine trust and the European Council's effectiveness. It called for **targeted treaty reforms** to enhance democratic decision-making and transparency within the European Council.

The Council is urged to ensure that the Presidency of the Council is conducted strictly in line with Union law, principles and the Union's credibility. It deplored the Hungarian government's misconduct of the Presidency of the Council in pursuing bilateral activities that contradict the Union's fundamental values and strongly urged the Council to condemn such conduct.