Discharge 2024: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

2025/2153(DEC) - 29/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2024, Section VIII - European Ombudsman.

In its resolution, adopted by 593 votes to 14, with 45 abstentions, Parliament made the following observations:

Budgetary and financial management

The Ombudsman's budget amounted to **EUR 13 843 160** in 2024, which represents an increase of EUR 630 713 (i.e. +4.77 %) compared to 2023 which is mainly due to salary adjustments. Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2024 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 97.55 %, representing an increase of 2.16 % compared to 2023. The current year payment appropriations execution rate was 97.08 %, representing a decrease of 0.50 % compared to 2023.

In 2024, the Ombudsman significantly reduced its expenditure for translation, following the successful integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the translation processes for the Ombudsman's website. The resulting savings were used to reinforce other areas via budgetary transfers.

Parliament noted that the impact of Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine continued to create budgetary pressure for the Ombudsman in 2024 notable in the field of energy costs.

Internal management, performance and internal control

In 2024, the Ombudsman handled 2 264 new complaints (2 392 in 2023), opened 411 inquiries (392 in 2023), including 49 inquiries of public importance (56 in 2023), closed 421 inquiries (372 in 2023) and dealt with a high number of public access complaints which has increased from 167 in 2023 to a (new) record number of 212 in 2024 (160 of them were followed up with inquiries and 193 of them were closed). Parliament commended the Ombudsman for having reduced the time needed to process files at different levels of the procedure, such as the average time for dealing with a complaint (from 39 days in 2023 to 36 days in 2024) and for dealing with a complaint within the mandate (from 91 days in 2023 to 86 days in 2024).

Parliament recognised the efforts made by and the positive impact of the Ombudsman in the areas of ethics, transparency and accountability in 2024, especially as a result of inquiries concerning various Union institutions, offices, bodies and agencies. The vast majority of those inquiries (65 %) concerned the Commission in 2025.

According to the Ombudsman, restrictions on access to documents, particularly legislative documents, should be exceptional and limited to what is absolutely necessary. Any decision denying public access to documents must be based on clearly and strictly defined legal exemptions, accompanied by a reasoned and specific justification, to enable citizens to understand the denial of access and make effective use of the legal remedies available.

Parliament agreed that in matters of significant public interest, such as the RRF, there should be no substantial delays in providing access to documents and considers that such delays amount to a denial of transparency and weaken democratic scrutiny.

Other observations

Parliament noted that:

- there was a decrease of 4.90 % in the total number of the **Ombudsman's staff** from 82 in 2023 to 78 in 2024. The staff occupation rate increased from 95 % in 2023 to 97 % in 2024.

- in terms of gender balance, the Ombudsman employs more women than men in all categories of staff, in particular at management level where all posts are held by women. An overall staff representation of 68 % women and 32 % men, compared to 67 % women and 33 % men in 2023. No cases of harassment were reported in 2024;

- the Ombudsman organised trainings on ethical matters for the Ombudsman's newly appointed confidential counsellors and the members of the conciliation committee, as well as mandatory tailor-made trainings on **conflict resolution** for all staff;

- the Ombudsman has continued to strengthen the institution's **ethical framework** and revised the whistleblower policy. Staff confirm a high level of awareness of ethical issues. No cases of conflict of interest or cases involving whistleblowers were reported in 2024;

- the Ombudsman's use of **automatic translations** is welcomed, which enhanced the accessibility of the Ombudsman's website, streamlined case allocation and accelerated the processing of complaints, leading to a reduction in translation costs by over 65 % (from 2022 to 2024) and in administrative burden;

- financial and administrative **savings** have been achieved through **interinstitutional cooperation**. Members welcomed the formalisation of collaboration between Parliament and the Ombudsman in the area of cybersecurity and congratulated the Ombudsman on his good cooperation with OLAF and the European Court of Auditors;

- the overall budget for **communication** and promotional activities (publications, event organisation, digital communication, etc.) decreased by approximately 38 % from EUR 155 200 in 2023 to EUR 96 515 in 2024.