Basic information

2002/2102(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2001 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	CONT Budgetary Control	STAES Bart (V/ALE)	10/09/2002
Council of the European Union	**Council configuration**	**Meetings**	**Date**
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2493	2003-03-07
European Commission	**Commission DG**	**Commissioner**	
	Budget		

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
30/04/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(2002)0405	
10/06/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/03/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
19/03/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0082/2003	
08/04/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0157/2003	Summary
08/04/2003	Debate in Parliament		
08/04/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		
12/03/2004	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2002/2102(DEC)

Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/5/16587

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0082/2003	19/03/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0157/2003 OJ C 064 12.03.2004, p. 0028-0231 E	08/04/2003	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	01375/2003	07/03/2003	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	01376/2003	07/03/2003	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2002)0405	30/04/2002	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N5-0538/2002 OJ C 295 28.11.2002, p. 0001-0288	10/10/2002	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Budget 2003/0416
OJ L 148 16.06.2003, p. 0061-0061 Summary

2001 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2002/2102(DEC) - 08/04/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

By adopting the report by Mr Bart STAES (Greens, ALE, B) by 296 votes for, 243 against and 11 abstentions, the European Parliament has agreed with the comments made by the committee responsible (please refer to the previous document) and gives discharge to its Secretary General for the implementation of the 2001 budget for the European Parliament. In an accompanying resolution the Parliament presents a series of comments. These comments concern the building policy of the institution as well as the operational expenditure of the Parliament. Firstly, the Parliament recalls that, following their recent revision, the Rules of Procedure now provide (with effect from the discharge procedure for the 2003 financial year) for discharge to be given to the President of the European Parliament, rather than the Secretary-General. It also takes the view that the scope of the discharge procedure should cover not only the management activities of the Parliament's Secretary-General and Administration but also the decisions taken by the Institution's governing bodies (President, Bureau and Conference of Presidents). Concerning the implementation of the budget, the Parliament notes the high level of implementation of the budget as evidence by the take-up rate (commitment) of available appropriations in the 2001 financial year (99,33% as against 99,28% in 2000). It notes that the main changes to the appropriations in the 2001 budget as originally adopted concerned rent and annual lease payments (173,79% increase intended to accelerate the financing of the LOW building in Strasbourg) and insurance (186,54% increase resulting from the need to conclude additional contracts following the cancellation by its insurers of existing cover in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001). As regards the places of work and buildings, the Parliament notes that 25 855 days per year are lost due to staff travel to Strasbourg; notes that this amounts to a cost for the taxpayer of EUR 3,9 million, and is the equivalent to the employment of 60 full time staff members per year. It requests that the figures presented in the report on the cost of Parliament's three places of work be adjusted to include this additional information and sent to the European Convention. It underlines that the forthcoming enlargement will result in an increase in the volume of Parliament's budget by 20 % and considers that the costs involved in maintaining three places of work are likely to follow the same trend and result in additional costs of about EUR 34 million. The loss of efficiency has been stressed for Members occasioned by travelling time. It accepts the view that any concentration of activities in one place of work would entail one-off infrastructure and staff removal costs. It admits that the decision on the meeting places of the Parliament has been laid down in the Treaty, but against the will of Parliament. The European Convention is urged to take due account of this study and to discuss the desirability of concentrating the activities of the European Parliament in one place. Concerning the buildings policy in Strasbourg, the Parliament regrets that the negotiations on the final investment cost of the LOW Building are still on hold pending the outcome of the action before the Court of Justice regarding the contractual completiondate and points to the uncertainty this creates for Parliament's budget planning. It recommends to the Bureau that it reconsider the proposal to build two new meeting rooms in Strasbourg and considers that a reconfiguration of the existing buildings could be sufficient to accommodate the arrival of new members after enlargement. With regard to the building policy in Brussels, the Parliament notes that since 15 January 2001 all the buildings in Brussels are now owned by Parliament following the capital injection made in previous years. More specifically, as regards the D4-D5 Ardenne, Parliament regrets that even after assurances given by Prime Ministers Martens and Dehaene the Belgian Government failed to make the sites concerned available to the Parliament but offered estate agents and developers the possibility of buying or acquiring an option to purchase property, for example by means of a purchase option agreement. This state of affairs presented the Parliament with a fait accompli and deprived it of the freedom to apply Community public procurement law in full. It considers that during the previous Parliamentary term, the European Parliament did not have a legal basis to justify reserving building land with a view to a possible enlargement of the European Union. The enlargement project was surrounded by great uncertainty and Parliament's Bureau was unable to take official decisions about enlargement until it had the legal basis of the treaty of Nice and the confirmation of the Copenhagen European Council. As far as the security policy is concerned, Parliament approved the measures in force concerning stricter checks on access and better checks on visitors. It urges a stepping-up of the cooperation of national security services that is essential for the security of the buildings. Concerning the analysis of budgetary management, Parliament is pleased with the improvement made in the presentation and user-friendliness of its analysis of budgetary management. It believes, nevertheless, that further efforts can be made to inform readers in an easily understandable manner of the most significant features of expenditure for the year. It regrets that a document as important as the Parliament's annual accounts should be available only as a sub-section of a technical volume published by the Commission in one language. It asks the Secretary-General to report on the feasibility of publishing Parliament's "Compte de Gestion", including a further improved analysis of budgetary management. Concerning human resources, the Parliament notes that the rationalisation of human resources with a view to enlargement is linked to the proposals for an early retirement scheme for officials of Parliament and its political groups. It expects the release of officials eligible under this scheme to be conducted in a fully fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner which also does not result in depriving Parliament of all its expertise at a stroke. Parliament supports the mobility policy and notes that some 118 A-grade officials (a little over 20 % of the total) have been subject to mobility in the three years of the scheme's operation, that mobility has become an accepted part of the culture of the Secretariat-General and that an essentially positive view of mobility is taken by those involved, both heads of service and officials subject to mobility. On the other hand, Parliamenttakes note of the criticism that the procedure is seen as excessively rigid, insists that a more individual-oriented approach, together with the development of a variety of human resources management tools, should lead to improvements as regards accompanying measures, particularly as regards professional training. It also believes that the rate of mobility should be increased for younger members of staff. Parliament stresses that the persistent problem of the excessively low number of women in high grades and the lack of progress in this area should not obscure the progress made over the past three years in the areas of working conditions, social infrastructure and raising awareness among the hierarchy. Parliament remains concerned at the lack of transparency in the appointment procedure to senior posts in Parliament and considers that the concern to safeguard the privacy of applicants is not justified by the lack of openness in the procedure. It calls for the names of all successful applicants for senior positions (A1, A2, A3) in the secretariat of Parliament and its political groups to be published on the noticeboards and in the internal bulletin of the Institution. It instructs its Secretary-General to publish the lists of successful candidates in open and internal competitions. Concerning Members' assistants, Parliament reiterates that it is absolutely vital that the rights of assistants working for Members should be safeguarded, including appropriate insurance and social security. It considers that the best way of doing this is through the adoption of the Statute for assistants. Regarding, Members' allowances, Parliament notes with concern the increasing number of Members registering their attendance during 'yellow' weeks, amounting to a cost of EUR 372 675, and underlines the point that yellow weeks were originally instituted as an important time for Members to connect with the constituencies which they represent. Lastly, as far as information policy is concerned, Parliament reiterates its request that the Parliament should hold an annual debate on EU information policy before the budget guidelines for the following financial year are established.

2001 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2002/2102(DEC) - 30/04/2002

PURPOSE : to present the revenue and expenditure account and the balance sheet concerning the activities of the budget for the financial year 2001 (European Parliament). CONTENT : this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the balance sheet for the other institutions of the Union (except the Commission) for the financial year 2001, in particular the European Parliament. The document shows that the appropriations included in the Parliament budget (including SAB 5/2001) amounted to EUR 1.012.600.000, up to 99.33%. These appropriations have been effectively paid up to a limit of EUR 869.193.296, this represents 86.42% in comparison with the commitments contracted (2000: 91.05%). The percentage of appropriations to be carried forward to the financial year 2002 amounts to 13.49% of the total budgetary appropriations, a net increase in comparison to the previous year (2000: 8.89%). The 2001 budget implementation has been marked by a series of amendments brought about by the initial allowance of certain posts, in particular: - expenditure of which the authoriser is not the supervisor (e.g. weightings); - un-blocking of the appropriations in the reserve by the budgetary authorities (in particular staff costs); - extraordinary event (net increase of building insurance following the 9/11/01 attacks); - real-estate policy : reorientation of the Parliament' real-estate budgetary policy. The aim is to speed-up the financing of the Louise Weiss building in Strasbourg by accumulating all the available appropriations to this effect within the budget and by proceeding to an advance payment without fines. The SAB 5/2001 had precisely this objective with an amount of EUR 24.8 million plus a series of appropriation transfers between budget lines for a total amount of almost EUR 100 million. Concerning more generally the use of appropriations by heading, the year 2001 had been marked by the strengthening of the appropriations relating to travel expenses of members of the institutions. These appropriations enabled MEPs to take part in several missions, for example to the Balkans and to Timor as well as a WTO conference in Qatar. Expenses linked to the cost of missions and visits have also increased in order to cover the costs resulting in the signature of the Cotonou Agreement. Overall the expenditure for mission have decreased from 6% between 1998 and 2000. Between 2000 and 2001, the number of mission days has decreased from 4%. On the other hand, the missions linked to external relations have clearly increased. The other facts marking the institutions expenditure are: - interinstitutional co-operation marked by the increase in continual vocational training costs of staff and the strengthening of external translation costs; - the setting up of a new Computer Centre and the preparation of setting up future Parliament Register (following the implementation of Regulation 1049/2001/EC on public access to Union documents).

2001 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2002/2102(DEC) - 08/04/2003 - Final act

PURPOSE : to grant discharge to the Parliament on the implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2001. COMMUNITY MEASURE : Decision 2003/416/EC, ECSC, Euratom of the European Parliament concerning discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2001 (Section I - European Parliament). CONTENT : with the present decision, the European Parliament grants its Secretary-General discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the 2001 financial year. This decision is accompanied by a series of comments which complete the discharge decision. These comments are included in the Parliament's opinion (please refer to the summary of the European Parliament's resolution dated 8 April 2003).

2001 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2002/2102(DEC) - 10/10/2002

PURPOSE : to present the Court of Auditor's Annual report on the implementation of the budget and other Community institutions for the financial year 2001 (European Parliament). CONTENT : the annual report from the Court of Auditors relating to the financial year 2001 concentrates on the entire Community budget, including the operational appropriations for the other institutions. These appropriations are managed directly by these authorities and are used primarily to pay the salaries, allowances and pensions of persons working for the Community Institutions, as well as rent, property, purchases and miscellaneous administrative expenditure. The Court has reviewed the information presented in Volumes I to IV of the revenue and expenditure account published by the Commission. Volumes I and III provide a commentary on budgetary management for the year and, in particular, explanations of variations between the approved budget and the appropriations finally available, as well as between the appropriations finally available and those utilised. This review sought to identify any significant variations for which explanations are not provided and to identify any explanation that might be considered misleading. The review did not reveal any such case. It should be noted that in response to the Court's observations of the Annual Report concerning the financial year 2000, the Commission and the Parliament have improved the presentation and user-friendliness of their analysis of budgetary management. In particular, the Commission has provided some global analysis and has introduced a more logical and consistent presentation between chapters and the Parliament has given factual information about the results achieved with the budgetary appropriation used. However, institutions other than the Commission continue to focus on describing changes in levels of appropriations during the year and on commitment made and not on the differences between sums committed and sums paid. It is still the Court's opinion that it would be desirable for all the institutions to provide a more global analysis of their budgetary management which highlights and explains trends over time in expenditure and the funding of major capital items, and which offers key measures of economy and efficiency. Sufficient explanations are now given on the specific issue of the Annual Report concerning the financial year 2000 of the way the Parliament transfers to the budget heading ' Rent and annual lease payments' unused appropriations from other budget headings to make capital repayments on buildings. Moreover, the Parliament explains that additional appropriations were made available for such repayments through Supplementary and Amending budget No 2 for the financial year 2001. As regards the reliability of the accounts, the Court maintains the observations concerning the Louise Weiss building in Strasbourg. The notes to the balance sheet still do not indicate that the net accounting value of EUR 329,9 million is an estimated value or that various construction-related costs are contested by the Parliament. Furthermore, Parliament has continued to depreciate 'special equipment' at the maximum rate of 25% with a result that the full depreciation is achieved at the end of the financial year 2001. Th Court does however state that except for the minor findingsmentioned above, the audit of the reliability of the accounts did not reveal any evidence of misstatements considered material to the consolidated accounts of the European Communities. The evaluation of the internal control systems and the outcome of the substantive testing of a sample of transactions relating to salaries paid to officials and temporary staff did not give rise to any significant observation. Lastly, the Court still observes that the scales used to pay mission

expenses to staff of categories C and D are higher than those provided for in the Staff Regulation. In addition the evaluation of the internal control systems and the outcome of the substantive testing of a sample of transactions relating to salaries paid to officials and temporary staff did not give rise to any significant observation.

2001 discharge: EC general budget, European Parliament

2002/2102(DEC) - 07/03/2003

PURPOSE : to present the Council recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Commission on the implementation of the Community budget for the financial year 2001 (Other sections). CONTENT : taking account of the observations made by the Court of Auditors in its report on the 2001 financial year, the Council calls on the European Parliament to give a discharge to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the budget (other sections) of the European Community for the financial year 2001. The implementation of the budget calls for a series of commentaries to be made by the Council which should be taken into consideration by the Commission, without delay. The Council is pleased to note the improvement in the presentation and readability of the analysis of budgetary management of certain institutions and urges the others to continue the efforts they have begun. The Council welcomes the fact that the Court considered that the overall results of the checks in the context of the Statement of Assurance had enabled it to ensure that the transactions underlying the financial statements, covered by heading 5 of the financial perspective, were both legal and regular. Like the Court, the Council calls on all the institutions to continue improving the system of compatibility, especially as regards the specific observations concerning application of the rules on the depreciation of buildings, the question of ensuring the reliability of the accounting inventory vis-à-vis the physical inventory, and the recording of advances and payments in the balance sheet accounts as soon as payments are made. The Council agrees with the Court about the need to sign a single contractual document for contracts concluded between the Commission's Legal Service and external lawyers, and it asks the Commission to make quite sure that the relevant tendering provisions are complied with. It should be noted that in light of its recommendation, the Council adopted a series of conclusions concerning the special reports adopted by the Court of Auditors in 2002 (reports concerning the various contentious issues and the implementation of the budget carried out by the Commission).