Basic information

2006/2063(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	CASPARY Daniel (PPE-DE)	20/04/2006

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

TRAN	Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
REGI	Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI	Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH	Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT	Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI	Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AFCO	Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM	Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PETI	Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2787	2007-02-27

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	KALLAS Siim

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
26/07/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(2006)0915	Summary

14/12/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/03/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
30/03/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0104/2007	
24/04/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0110/2007	Summary
24/04/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
24/04/2007	Debate in Parliament		
24/04/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		
15/07/2008	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2006/2063(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/6/34680

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE382.618	10/01/2007	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE386.379	06/03/2007	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0104/2007	30/03/2007	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0110/2007	24/04/2007	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2006)0915 OJ C 263 31.10.2006, p. 0001	26/07/2006	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N6-0039/2006 OJ C 263 31.10.2006, p. 0001	31/10/2006	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Budget 2008/0505 OJ L 187 15.07.2008, p. 0071	Summary

2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 27/02/2007

The Council, on the basis of intensive preparatory work, approved a recommendation on the discharge to be given to the European Ombudsman for implementation of its budget for 2005. The recommendation will be submitted to the European Parliament, in accordance with the budgetary discharge procedure.

The Council makes reference to the **Court of Auditors report on translation expenditure** (see summary of the document annexed to the Commission's discharge procedure DEC/2006/2070 dated 8 February 2007 06162/2007). It adopted the following conclusions:

Firstly, it states that it welcomes the Court's special report on translation expenditure - which amounted to EUR 511 million in 2005 - incurred by three institutions in particular as it covers the period of the accession of 10 new Member States, increasing the number of official and working languages to 21. In this context, it underlines the importance of the translation of documents in a European Union **multilingual environment** with equal treatment of the languages of its Member States.

It emphasises that translation demands are to be met in time and in adequate quality, as an essential part of the legislative process keeping the cost under control as well as having adequate procedures to give priority to essential translations which implies efficient and effective management of translation resources. It regrets, however, that in some cases politically important information which should be translated has been included in non translated annexes of documents.

The Council notes with satisfaction that the Court of Auditors stated that the institutions have generally met translation needs in the EU-15 languages in required quality inter alia by recourse to freelance translators. It regrets that all three institutions have faced structural difficulties in providing a sufficient volume and acceptable quality into the EU-10 languages. It expects the institutions to further enhance the degree of multilingualism as regards the information provided on their websites.

Moreover, the Council regrets the fact that the institutions, with the exception of the Commission for 2002, have not calculated their total costs or the average cost per page translated and invites them to do so from now on and inform the budgetary authority on a regular basis.

It notes with concern the fact that the productivity of the EU translation services is much lower than in the private sector, partly due to more effective use of IT tools in the private sector, although the quality of internal translation is recognised to be higher. It notes the long term action plan by the Council General Secretariat to increase its productivity by reducing the number of "full-time equivalent" in the EU-15 language units.

Inter-institutional cooperation: the Council advocates inter-institutional cooperation being reinforced to all institutions in order to improve the efficiency and the procedures and to reduce the costs in the field of translations. It urges the institutions to set up proper forecasting system and improve the system of workload balancing in order to make better use of spare capacity and to avoid unnecessary outsourcing. In 2005, according to the Court, EUR 11 million of freelance translation costs could have been saved by the Commission and by the Parliament by giving the non-urgent documents to be translated for other institutions. It regrets that it was not possible for the institutions to recruit enough translators in EU-10 languages which has resulted in quality and deadline problems in the EU-10 translations and it recommends that sufficient EU-10 translator resources should be ensured by measures increasing awareness and fostering interest in the Community's translation activity in the EU-10 Member States and other Candidate Countries. It recommends that similar measures be taken for Bulgaria and Romania.

The Council emphasises that future measures are to be taken by the institutions to contain the volume translated including control of the size of documents, without prejudice of equal treatment of EU official and working languages taking into account the operational effectiveness, and adoption of a fit-for-purpose approach for authorised texts for translation and encourages the institutions to improve their work planning and comply with the deadlines for requesting translations.

Lastly, the Council requests the institutions to improve the efficiency of the translation process in particular by intensifying the recourse to IT tools, reduction of secretarial support, working methods based on best practices and teleworking. It also invites the Court to examine also the translation expenditure of the other institutions and bodies.

2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 24/04/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman for the 2005 financial year.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2008/505/EC of the European Parliament on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2005 (Section VIII A - European Ombudsman).

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2005.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 24 April 2007 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 24/04/2007).

2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 31/10/2006

PURPOSE : to present the Court of Auditors' report on the implementation of the 2005 budget (other institutions – European Ombudsman).

CONTENT : in its 29th Annual Report on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union, the Court highlights that 2005 was the first full year in which the European Union had 25 Members. The Court's audit did not reveal any material errors concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions.

Supervisory and control systems: in 2005 all the Institutions had supervisory and control systems complying with the requirements of the new Financial Regulation. However, some Institutions had not fully implemented all their Internal Control Standards (in particular the Council).

Also in 2005, the NAP (Nouvelle Application Paie), a computer application for calculating staff remunerations created in 2003 and managed by the Commission Paymaster Office (PMO), was being used by all the Institutions. The technical weaknesses noted in 2004 were overcome, minimising the risk of erroneous calculation of the various elements of staff remuneration. However, the institutions did not systematically use the reporting facilities of NAP in order to verify, before the final pay run, all the data concerning situations specific to individual members of staff. Although not mandatory pursuant to the Financial Regulation, ex-post controls would increase the reliability of the administrative procedures for managing staff remunerations and help to uncover possible weaknesses and errors in the system.

Staff Regulations: the amended Staff Regulations, which entered into force on 1 May 2004, state that accommodation costs incurred on mission are reimbursed up to a maximum fixed for each country. Contrary to this rule, all the Institutions, except the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the Ombudsman, provided in their internal rules for the payment of a flat-rate sum, ranging from 30 to 60 % of the maximum allowable amount, to staff who do not produce any evidence of having incurred accommodation costs. After the publication of the European Court of Auditors' Annual Report concerning the financial year 2004, the European Economic and Social Committee amended its internal rules in December 2005 in order to ensure compliance with the Staff Regulations.

Specific remarks concerning the Ombudsman: to recall, the Ombudsman's administrative expenditure totalled EUR 6 million in 2005. The Court states that the audit did not give rise to any material observations.

General conclusions: the Court states that improvements have been made by all the Institutions in order to adapt their supervisory and control systems to the requirements of the new Financial Regulation. The Court's audit found that, notwithstanding the weaknesses mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the supervisory and control systems were adequate to manage the risk as regards legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts of the Institutions' administrative expenditure. The Court's audit did not reveal material errors affecting the legality and regularity of the administrative expenditure.

2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 24/04/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted Daniel **CASPARY** (EPP-ED, D) and granted the European Ombudsman discharge for implementation of the budget for the financial year 2005. In doing so, it made a series of observations on the discharge in its accompanying resolution.

Parliament noted that in 2005 the European Ombudsman had available commitment appropriations amounting to a total of EUR 7 224 554 (2004: EUR 5 782 968) with a utilisation rate of 84,27%. The Ombudsman's 2005 financial statements disclose a negative economic out-turn for the year (EUR 98 482) and identical totals of assets and liabilities (EUR 890 853). The Court of Auditors in its Annual Report on the 2005 financial year indicated that the audit did not give rise to any observations as regards the Ombudsman. However, self assessment indicated that improvements in effectiveness were needed in some areas (risk assessment, sensitive functions, multi-annual programming).

Parliament recorded that the Ombudsman's annual caseload had increased from roughly 800 in 1996 to nearly 4 000 in 2005, with a particularly sharp rise between 2003 and 2004 (53%). It noted that he continued his information visits to the Member States with a view to improving citizens' awareness about their rights, making 120 presentations at conferences, seminars and meetings during 2005, together with 50 interviews with journalists. The Ombudsman sought to target information to those countries where the level of complaints received was lower than might be expected given the size of the population, for example, Germany and Italy. The Ombudsman's media strategy is therefore to raise the Ombudsman's profile in such Member States. Parliament considered, however, that in order to identify target countries, the Ombudsman should rely on surveys on the awareness of the citizens about his work in the various Member States rather than the number of complaints.

Lastly, Parliament recalled that the Ombudsman's Statute laid down by the European Parliament in 1994 imposes no obligation on the Ombudsman to publish his financial and economic interests. However, it asked that the Ombudsman should follow the example set by the European Data Protection Supervisor and his deputy in publishing a declaration of financial interests based on the form used for the Register of Financial Interests of Members of the European Parliament.

2005 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2006/2063(DEC) - 26/07/2006 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: presentation of the final annual accounts of the European Community for the financial year 2005 – Other institutions : Section VIII (A) - European Ombudsman.

CONTENT: this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the financial statement of the European Ombudsman for 2005 and presents an analysis of its financial management. The available appropriations set out in the Ombudsman's 2005 budget amounted to **EUR 7.72 million**, with an 89.75% utilisation rate.

Main axes of 2004 expenditure: the implementation report states that the activities carried out by this institution can be characterised by 4 main issues :

- **Ombudsman's workload following enlargement**: with the arrival of 10 new Member States, the number of complaints increased from 3688 in 2004 to 3920 in 2005;
- **Towards a new cooperation agreement with the EP** to reinforce interinstitutional cooperation (this agreement should enter into force in 2006);
- **A new "Finance" department**: the Ombudsman's Administration and Finance Department was overhauled in 2005, with its division into four sectors — the Administration Sector, the Finance Sector, the Complaints-Handling Sector and the Communications Sector. The aim of this restructuring was to allow for greater specialisation within the individual sectors, with co-ordination ensured by the Head of the Department. Within the Legal Department, procedures for case-management and quality control were strengthened, to ensure consistent monitoring and reliable handling of larger numbers of complaints by a larger team of Legal Officers;
- **Tenth anniversary**: various events were organised with the EU institutions and bodies during the anniversary year.

Amendments to the 2004 budget: throughout 2004, the Ombudsman made amendments to the budget through 4 transfers between items and chapters:

- costs relating to the implementation of the Ombudsman's Work Programme (notably increasing its profile in the new Member States);
- costs relating to the reform of the Staff Regulations;
- mop up transfer;
- establishing a reserve of translators.

The main issues of the 2005 budget implementation can be summarised as follows:

Title I (Staff costs) : the budget implementation was marked by:

- the cut in mission and travel costs, a 60% rate of utilisation;
- costs relating to the organisation of training courses and the exchange of personnel were reduced;
- interinstitutional cooperation costs were increased following a budget transfer to cover translation costs.

Title II (Operational expenditure): this heading showed an increase in appropriations for office equipment and the hiring of an official car for the Ombudsman. On the other hand, an under-utilisation of item "meetings in general" was noted.

Title III (Specific mission costs): only EUR 2139 were committed from the EUR 3000 available to cover costs relating to relations with the Ombudsman's international organisations.

For further details concerning the Committee's expenditure in 2005, please refer to the annexed detailed analysis of expenditure.