Basic information

2006/2158(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2005 discharge: European Environment Agency **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	HERCZOG Edit (PSE)	20/04/2006

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	HAUG Jutta (PSE)	14/09/2006

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
31/10/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	N6-0026/2006	Summary
29/11/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/03/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
30/03/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0103/2007	
24/04/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0117/2007	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	2006/2158(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/6/42408

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE384.437	09/02/2007	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE382.437	28/02/2007	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE386.400	08/03/2007	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0103/2007	30/03/2007	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0117/2007	24/04/2007	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	05711/2007	07/02/2007	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
OS	Non-legislative basic document	N6-0026/2006 OJ C 266 31.10.2006, p. 0001	31/10/2006	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N6-0001/2007 OJ C 312 19.12.2006, p. 0001	19/12/2006	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Budget 2008/0515
OJ L 187 15.07.2008, p. 0106 Summary

2005 discharge: European Environment Agency

2006/2158(DEC) - 27/02/2007

The Council, on the basis of intensive preparatory work, approved a recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Directors of the 16 European Union agencies for implementation of their 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: European Environment Agency

2006/2158(DEC) - 19/12/2006

This report from the Court of Auditors concerns the results of the audit carried out by the Court on the annual accounts of the European Environment Agency for the financial year ended 31 December 2005.

The Court states that its audit was planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance that the accounts are reliable and the underlying transactions are legal and regular. The Agency's accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2005 are, in all material respects, reliable.

The report shows that the appropriations entered in the final budget amount to **EUR 32 144 000** with EUR 32 062 000 committed and EUR 26 137 000 paid. EUR 5 995 000 was carried over to 2006, and EUR 12 000 cancelled. The outstanding commitments carried over from the previous financial year were EUR 7 893 000.

The Court makes the following observations:

- the Agency committed nearly all the appropriations in its budget for the financial year 2005. Nevertheless, it is noted that the carry-over rate (over 30 %) for commitments for its operating activities (Title III) is high. The Agency should ensure a reduction in carry-overs, whose volume hampers the management of the following year's appropriations, which subsequently creates delays in implementation or even increases them;

- there is no description of the internal control systems. The authorising officers have not provided a formal description of the systems that they use for supplying and substantiating accounts information and the accounting officer has therefore still not been able to validate them;

- there are shortcomings in the authorising officer's annual activity report in that it does not supply adequate information on the results of the year's activities in relation to the objectives established, the associated risks, the use of resources and the functioning of the internal control systems;

- during the audit of the procedures for the recruitment of temporary staff, it was observed that certain internal provisions concerning the joint nature of the selection committees and the inalterability of the selection criteria adopted beforehand did not comply with the provisions of the conditions of employment of other servants of the Communities;

- in the procurement field, the Court found shortcomings in respect of evaluation criteria. There is no specific information on how information on prices should be taken into account. This situation leads to unjustified discrepancies in the appraisal of tenders.

The Agency responds point by point to the Court's observations.

Firstly, it states that percentage carry-over has been reduced progressively in recent years and dropped to 31 % for Title III in 2005. Given that most of the Title III contracts for example with topic centres allow work until the end of the calendar year with final deliveries and payments of up to 30 % in the following year, it is difficult to reduce Title III carryover much further than currently achieved. The internal control systems are under continuous development.

As regards the annual activity reports for 2003 and 2004, the EEA has tried to accommodate the requirements of the annual activity report within the Annual Report required under EEA's founding regulation. EEA has not been able to do so and hence from 2005 onwards it produces separate reports. The two 2005 reports were sent to the Court and others on 15 June 2006.

As from 2006, the Staff Committee has been requested to appoint an equal number of representatives and all procurement procedures have been strengthened.

2005 discharge: European Environment Agency

2006/2158(DEC) - 07/02/2007

Having examined the revenue and expenditure account for the financial year 2005, the balance sheet of revenue and expenditure at 31 December 2005 of the European Environment Agency, the Council recommends the European Parliament to give a discharge to the Executive Director of the Agency in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2005.

In doing so, the Council confirms that EUR 5.8 million (74%) of the EUR 7.9 million in appropriations carried forward from the financial year 2004 to the financial year 2005 have been used. In addition, EUR 7.6 million in appropriations have been carried forward from the financial year 2005 to the financial year 2006 and EUR 400 000 has been cancelled.

In parallel, the Council makes accompanying comments on the discharge which should be followed up. In particular, it:

- notes once again that the problems of appropriations **carried-over** still persist for the Agency's operating activities. Therefore, it calls on the Agency to take appropriate measures to improve the implementation of the budget, in respect of the principle of annuality. It recalls that the budget should be based on realistic needs and past implementation;
- calls on the Agency to remedy the weaknesses identified by the Court in its **internal control systems** and in its annual activity report. It calls on the Agency to establish a description of the internal control systems;
- calls on the Agency to eliminate the shortcomings concerning the application of the staff regulation and in particular the selection criteria adopted for the **recruitment** of temporary staff, as well as shortcomings identified in the procurement field.

2005 discharge: European Environment Agency

2006/2158(DEC) - 24/04/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Edit **HERCZOG** (PSE, HU), and granted the executive director of the European Environment Agency discharge for the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2005. It then approved closing the accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2005.

The Parliamentary resolution is divided into two parts. The first contained general points, and concerned the majority of EU Agencies requiring individual discharge. The second part contained specific points relating to the Agency.

General points: Parliament considers that the ever-growing number of Community Agencies and the activities of certain of them do not seem to form part of an overall policy framework, and that the remits of some Agencies do not always reflect the real needs of the Union. Accordingly, it invites the Commission to define an overall policy framework for the setting up of new Community Agencies and to present a cost-benefit study before the setting

up of any new agency, while being careful to avoid any overlap of activities between Agencies or with the remits of other European organisations. Parliament calls on the Court of Auditors to give its opinion on this cost-benefit study before Parliament takes its decision, and it asks the Commission to present every five years a study on the added value of every existing Agency. ; invites all relevant institutions In the case of a negative evaluation of the added value of an Agency, all relevant institutions are asked to take the necessary steps by reformulating the mandate of that Agency or by closing it.

In view of the constantly increasing number of Agencies, Parliament feels that the Directorates-General of the Commission charged with the setting up and monitoring of Agencies must develop a common approach to the Agencies. It also asks the Commission to improve administrative and technical support to the Agencies. Parliament regretted that the negotiations on the draft interinstitutional agreement on the operating framework for the European regulatory agencies have not yet been concluded, and calls on the Commission, in consultation with the Court of Auditors, to do their utmost to ensure that the agreement is brought to a rapid conclusion. Noting that the Commission's budgetary responsibility calls for closer linking of the Agencies to the Commission, Parliament calls on the Commission and the Council to take all necessary steps to give the Commission a blocking minority in the supervisory bodies of the regulatory Agencies by 31 December 2007 and to provide for such a minority from the outset when new Agencies are set up. It invites the Court of Auditors to create an additional chapter in its Annual Report, devoted to all Agencies to be discharged under the Commission's accounts in order to have a much clearer picture of the use of EU funds by Agencies.

Parliament goes on to ask the Commission to come up with a proposal to harmonise the format of the annual reporting by the Agencies and to develop performance indicators which would allow a comparison of their efficiency. The Commission is urged to monitor and direct the management of the Agencies, especially in relation to the proper application of tender procedures, transparency of recruitment procedures, sound financial management and, most importantly, the proper application of the rules concerning the internal control framework.

Specific points concerning theEuropean Environment Agency: Parliament notes that the carry-over rate for commitments for its operating activities remained high, at 30%, and called for this to be reduced given the difficulties it created for the management of the following year’s appropriations. The Agency was asked to improve the internal control systems, noting that the authorising officers have not provided a formal description of the systems that they use for supplying and substantiating accounts information and the accounting officer has therefore still not been able to validate them. There are still shortcomings in the authorising officer's annual activity report which does not supply adequate information on the results of the year's activities in relation to the objectives established, the associated risks, the use of resources and the functioning of the internal control systems. Parliament asks the Agency to respect procedures for recruitment, as well as the evaluation criteria in procurement procedures. It considers the Agency to be a source of important environmental information for all EU institutions and policy-making, noting with satisfaction that the Agency has been able to transform some complicated data into clear conclusions and to communicate them to the public. Parliament acknowledges, in particular, the importance of the report 'The European environment - State and outlook 2005' in providing user-friendly information on the environment and pinpointing the key challenges facing the EU and Member States.

Lastly, Parliament asks that, before 1 January 2010 and every five years thereafter, the Agency commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements and work programmes. The Agency should examine the conclusions of the evaluation and draft such recommendations to the Commission and Parliament as may be necessary regarding changes in the Agency, its working practices and programmes. The evaluation and the recommendations should be made public.

2005 discharge: European Environment Agency

2006/2158(DEC) - 24/04/2007 - Final act

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

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2008/515/EC of the European Parliament on the discharge for the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2005.

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants discharge to the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency for the implementation of the Agency’s 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: European Environment Agency

2006/2158(DEC) - 31/10/2006 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: presentation of the final accounts of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2005.

CONTENT: this document published in the Official Journal of the EU sets out a detailed account of the implementation of the 2005 budget, including the revenue and expenditure and the balance sheet for the year concerned.

According to this document, the final budget amounted to **EUR 32.1 million** (against EUR 31.1 million in 2004) including an 84% Community subsidy.

As regards the staffing policy, the Agency, whose headquarters are in Copenhagen (Denmark), officially set out 115 posts in its establishment plan. 107 of these posts are currently occupied with + 34 other posts (auxiliary contracts, seconded national experts, local and employment-agency staff) assigned to operational, administrative and mixed tasks. Staff expenditure amounted to EUR 14.5 million.

The Agency’s main activities concentrated on the following :

- the launch of the report on the state of, trends in and prospects for the environment entitled ‘The European environment: state and outlook 2005’;

- implementation of base indicators concerning the state of the environment as an operational part of the AEE’s environmental information system;

- launch of the process of ‘Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators’;

- launch of two new topic centres on biodiversity and resource and waste management;

- seminars organised under the Presidency of the Council;

- assistance in harmonising data;

- management of the EIONET network (European Environment Information and Observation Network).

The complete version of the final accounts may be found at the following address:

http://www.eea.europa.eu/documents