Basic information

2007/2036(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2006 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	LUNDGREN Nils (IND/DEM)	27/03/2007

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.	27/02/2007
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.	20/03/2007
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	2847	2008-02-12

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	KALLAS Siim

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
		SEC(2007)1055	Summary

30/03/2007	Non-legislative basic document published		
25/10/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/03/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
01/04/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0092/2008	
22/04/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0140/2008	Summary
22/04/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
22/04/2008	Debate in Parliament		
22/04/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		
31/03/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2007/2036(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/6/46704

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE400.416	05/02/2008	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE402.906	07/03/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0092/2008	01/04/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0140/2008	22/04/2008	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2007)1055	30/03/2007	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N6-0005/2008 OJ C 273 15.11.2007, p. 0001	15/11/2007	Summary

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Budget 2009/0195 OJ L 088 31.03.2009, p. 0087	Summary

2006 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2007/2036(DEC) - 22/04/2008 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2006.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2009/195/EC of the European Parliament on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2006 (Section VIII - 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 2006.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 22 April 2008 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 22/04/2008).

2006 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2007/2036(DEC) - 30/03/2007 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the final annual accounts of the European Communities for the financial year 2006 – 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 2006 and presents an analysis of its financial management.

Summary in figures: the figures mentioned hereafter are taken from the provisional annual accounts for the financial year 2006 relating to the Ombudsman. These amounts may be subject to amendments after consolidation.

- **Appropriations authorised for the financial year 2006**: EUR 7 682 538;
- **Committed appropriations**: EUR 7 084 239.81 (92.21% of the budget being utilised);
- **Paid appropriations**: EUR 6 365 069.79;
- **Appropriations carried over from 2006 to 2007**: EUR 405 185.73;
- **Appropriations carried over from 2005 to 2006**: EUR 623 748.57 (a utilisation rate of 95.65% for appropriations).

Main axes of 2006 expenditure: the 2006 budget for the Ombudsman is the first to have been voted and implemented using the new budgetary structure. The aim of this new structure was to increase transparency and to facilitate a better control by the budgetary authority, due to a better supervision of similar expenses which, in the structure used up until now, were allocated under many titles or headings.

On the budgetary front, 2006 saw one single transfer of appropriations (a "mop up" transfer) in order to enable 2 minor changes made necessary due to the move from the financial regime of the previous Ombudsman (temporary scheme of allowances) to a pension regime. Therefore, it was necessary to adjust and reinforce the available appropriations (+EUR 3 000) in order to provide for the pension of the previous Ombudsman. This transfer also aimed to partially cover (+ EUR 75 000) the translating costs of decisions of the Ombudsman in 2006.

The budgetary year also was noted for:

1. **theOmbudsman's workload**: in 2006, the Ombudsman received 3 830 complaints (compared to 3 920 in 2005 and 3 688 in 2004), which shows that the level of complaints has stabilised following the mountain of complaints in 2004 (+53% compared to 2003). This evolution had repercussions both for the magistrates in charge of enquiries and for the Secretariat responsible for handling complaints. Further recruitment and increased productivity enabled the significant increase in the number of complaints during previous years to be dealt with;
2. **the new cooperation agreement with the EP**: as specified in previous Ombudsman discharge reports, some administrative services are shared with the European Parliament. This cooperation was formalised by an agreement in 1995. However, since 2004, the Ombudsman has

assumed a sizeable proportion of both its financial and administrative management. The cooperation agreement was therefore adapted to reflect this reality, identifying the areas where cooperation could be most profitable, and helping to avoid duplication. A new agreement was, therefore, signed in 2006 taking this new situation into account;

3. **the consolidation of the new "Finance" department of the Ombudsman**: in accordance with its new Institution status, the Ombudsman's "Administration and Finance" department which oversees its budget management was overhauled. In line with the new Financial Regulation, the Ombudsman now benefits from an *ad hoc* supervisory and monitoring team for its public markets. In 2006, further effort was devoted to the making the Ombudsman's administrative sector more autonomous, regarding its personnel. This effort resulted in particular attention being given to the documentation of internal financial procedures and to the internal management of personnel. The year was also characterised by the conclusion of the recruitment procedure for the Secretary General of the Ombudsman (appointed in July 2006);
4. **seminar for the Ombudsman's personnel – "retreat"**: a retreat was organised for the Ombudsman's personnel in order to discuss the many organisational changes. This retreat was an opportunity to complete both a self-evaluation exercise and a risk assessment of the independent operation of the Ombudsman as an Institution.

Overall, the report indicates that 2006 was very efficient from a budgetary perspective: new challenges in terms of responsibility and independence regarding the European Parliament's services were successfully overcome, and the objectives identified in the annual programme of activities were achieved. Furthermore, no major dysfunction was noted by the internal or external control bodies.

Other salient issues of the Ombudsman's budget implementation can be summarised as follows:

Title 1 (*Expenditure relating to persons working with the Institution*) : this budgetary title is characterised by:

- lower growth of expenditure of outside services: utilisation rate was only 75% of the appropriations entered in the budget;
- other expenses related to personnel: only 51.85% of this budgetary chapter was used.

Title II (*Buildings, equipment and operating expenditure*): this budgetary title was characterised by a net lower growth of expenditure for equipment and buildings (67.6% of appropriations committed and 17.33% paid, causing a carryover of appropriations to 2007 of a value of EUR 28 860).

Title III: (*Specific mission costs of the Institution*) : this title was markedly strengthened compared to previous years, with a planned budget of some EUR 789 000 of which 77% was spent: it was needed to cover expenses of meetings and conferences, expertise and information (archiving complaints and disseminating documents), studies and other subsidies (only half the budget used) and for expenses relating to the functions of the Ombudsman (inherent expenses specific to the obligations of the Ombudsman, such as relations with international organisations of Ombudsmen and other expenses which are directly related to the achievement of the Ombudsman's tasks – these very specific expenses were limited to EUR 1 500 of the planned EUR 4 000).

2006 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2007/2036(DEC) - 22/04/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 614 votes in favour, 15 against and 38 abstentions, a Decision to grant the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2006. The decision to grant discharge also constitutes closure of the accounts of this institution.

At the same time, the Parliament adopted by 616 votes in favour, 14 against and 37 abstentions, a Resolution containing the comments which form part of the decision giving discharge. The report had been tabled for plenary by Nils **LUNDGREN** (ID, SE) on behalf of the Committee on Budgetary Control.

The Resolution recalls that, in 2006, the European Ombudsman had available commitment appropriations amounting to a total of EUR 7 682 538 (compared to EUR 7 224 554 in 2005), with a utilisation rate of 88.13%. The Parliament also notes that, over the period 2003 to 2006, commitment appropriations steadily increased (from EUR 4 438 653 to EUR 7 682 538 (+73%), the number of posts increased from 31 to 57 units (+84%), while complaints increased by 57% and new inquiries opened increased from 253 to 258 (+2%)).

Recalling that the European Court of Auditors indicated in its Annual Report that the audit did not give rise to any observations as regards the Ombudsman, the Parliament welcomes the Ombudsman's internal management as well as the internal control of the services. However, it notes that improvements in efficiency are needed in some areas (for example, identification of sensitive functions).

Furthermore, the Parliament welcomes the conclusion of the new framework cooperation agreement with the Parliament concerning the provision of certain administrative services (buildings, IT, communications, legal advice, medical services, training, translation and interpretation) as well as the appointment of the Ombudsman's Secretary General on 1 April 2006.

Lastly, the Parliament makes some observations concerning the following points:

- **Recruitment of personnel**: the Parliament notes with concern the recruitment difficulties highlighted in the Ombudsman's 2006 annual report, especially in relation to qualified lawyers, due to the two successive waves of enlargement (2004 and 2007), to staff turnover and to the difficulty in attracting and retaining candidates in Strasbourg with temporary contracts;
- **Declarations of financial interests**: the Parliament welcomes the Ombudsman's decision to publish the annual declaration of interests on his website. In addition, it welcomes the Ombudsman's decision to accede to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 25 May 1999 on internal investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

2006 discharge: EC general budget, European Ombudsman

2007/2036(DEC) - 15/11/2007

PURPOSE: to present the report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2006 (other institutions – European Ombudsman).

CONTENT: in its annual report for the financial year 2006, the Court evaluates the legality and regularity of operational expenditure of the institutions. While, on the whole, all the institutions have put in place a satisfactory monitoring and control framework, the Court notes a certain number of weaknesses in terms of compliance with procurement procedures by the institutions (particularly a lack of competition between tenderers in the case of negotiated procedures).

For the rest, the Court notes that the incidence of error on expenditure samples selected by the Court for scrutiny was not significant. However, the Court expects the highlighted weaknesses to be addressed in the future.

Audit of the European Ombudsman: the audit of areas showing specific risk indicated that shortcomings affected the monitoring and control systems for the payment of allowances to members of certain institutions. However, the audit of the European Ombudsman did not lead to any significant observations.