Basic information

2008/2276(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Parliament **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	CASACA Paulo (PSE)	26/03/2008

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.	06/10/2008
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	2922	2009-02-10

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	KALLAS Siim

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
		SEC(2008)2359	Summary

23/07/2008	Non-legislative basic document published		
20/11/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/03/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
23/03/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0184/2009	
21/04/2009	Debate in Parliament		
23/04/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0260/2009	Summary
23/04/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/04/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
26/09/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2008/2276(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/6/67215

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE416.522	30/01/2009	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE420.230	19/02/2009	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0184/2009	23/03/2009	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0260/2009	23/04/2009	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2008)2359	23/07/2008	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N6-0003/2009 OJ C 286 10.11.2008, p. 0001	10/11/2008	Summary

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

Final act	
Budget 2009/0628 OJ L 255 26.09.2009, p. 0001	Summary

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Parliament

2008/2276(DEC) - 23/07/2008 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the final annual accounts of the European Communities for the financial year 2007 – Other institutions: section I – European Parliament.

CONTENT: this document establishes the level of expenditure and the balance sheet of the European Parliament for 2007 and presents an analysis of its financial management.

Total expenditure in 2007: EUR 1 344 470 437, including:

- **staff expenditure**: EUR 493 984 334;
- **fixed asset related expenditure**: EUR 81 531 449;
- **other administrative expenditure**: EUR 788 954 654.

The document reviews, item by item, all of the European Parliaments expenditure throughout 2007, proposing for each of the Directorates-General of the Parliament (DGs) activity and spending targets, DG by DG.

A detailed report of these targets appears in the different “Annual activity reports” of the different DGs of the European Parliament, as listed below:

- DG 1 – Directorate-General for the Presidency;
- DG 2 – Directorate-General for Internal Policies;
- DG 3 – Directorate-General for External Policies;
- DG 4 – Directorate-General for Information;
- DG 5 – Directorate-General for Personnel;
- DG 6 – Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Interpretation;
- DG 7 – Directorate-General for Translation and Publishing;
- DG 8 – Directorate-General for Finance.

Recall that (as in previous years) the **main axes of expenditure and key activity targets** of the European Parliament for 2007 are as follows:

1. Succeed with enlargement;
2. Develop information and communication policies;
3. Help the Parliament improve the quality of EU legislation;
4. Make better use of resources.

These main axes have been implemented in each of the aforementioned activity reports.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Parliament

2008/2276(DEC) - 23/04/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Parliament for the financial year 2007.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2009/628/EC, Euratom of the European Parliament on the discharge for implementing the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2007 (Section I – European Parliament).

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants discharge to its President for the implementation of the general budget for 2007.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 23 April 2009 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 23/04/2009).

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Parliament

2008/2276(DEC) - 23/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 419 votes to 106, with 67 abstentions, a decision to grant its President discharge in respect of the European Parliament's budget for the financial year 2007.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution containing a series of observations concerning the discharge decision. It recalled that the final accounts show that, in 2007, the Parliament had a total budget of EUR 1.789 billion (balance sheet at 31 December 2007). It also recalls that this discharge is the last of the 2004-2009 parliamentary term, during which a large number of changes in EU budgetary management in general, and in Parliament's management in particular, have taken place (with the implementation of the new Financial Regulation, the revision of Staff Regulations and Rules applicable to other servants, the accession of 12 new Member States and a significant increase in the number of staff, etc).

The main points of the resolution can be summarised as follows:

Statement of assurance (DAS) by the Secretary-General: welcoming the Secretary-General's statement in which he certifies that he has a reasonable assurance that Parliament's budget has been implemented in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that the control framework put in place provides the necessary guarantees as to the legality and regularity of the underlying operations, Parliament regrets the observation included in the DAS that the regulatory framework governing parliamentary allowances, including expenditure on parliamentary assistance, has become so complex that it presents serious weaknesses. It recalls, in this regard, that a new system should come into force by July 2009.

Contracts and procurement: Parliament recalls that it publishes general information about contracts awarded on its website, and that, in accordance with the Financial Regulation, it publishes (i) specific information on contracts of a value of over EUR 60 000 in the Official Journal and (ii) a list of contracts of a value of between EUR 25 000 and EUR 60 000 on its website. It also notes that, despite amendments to the Financial Regulation, its rules on procurement are still excessively cumbersome for smaller institutions, especially in relation to tenders for contracts for relatively small amounts. It therefore invites the Commission to consult extensively with the Secretaries-General and administrations of the other institutions in order to ensure that their concerns are also fully taken into account in the final draft.

Activity reports by the Directors-General: Parliament observes with satisfaction that all Directors-General were able to give an unreserved statement of assurance in respect of the implementation of the budget by their services in 2007. Moreover, it adopts a series of recommendations made by its committee responsible on the content of the activity report sby the Directors-General (refer to the summary of the committee responsible of 16/03 /2009).

Parliamentary assistance allowance: Parliament welcomes the achievement - in response to previous discharge resolutions (2006) - in having obtained the necessary supporting documents to regularise virtually all claims (99.9 % by amount) for the period 2004-2007. It calls on the Secretary-General to provide Members who have complied with the rules concerning the use of the parliamentary assistance allowance with a letter from administration stating so.

European Political Parties: Parliament points out that in all reports, the auditors certified unreservedly that the accounts submitted were in conformity with the main statutory provisions of Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 and that they presented a true and faithful picture of the situation of the political parties at the close of the 2007 financial year. Parliament notes that, as in 2005 and 2006, budgetary implementation by two parties (AEN and PDE) fell significantly short of the provisional budget, and that the authorising officer was instructed to recover as regards 2007. Parliament recalls that the Bureau took note of the proposed code of conduct for electoral campaigns by political parties in the context of the European elections 2009.

Voluntary pension fund: Parliament notes that, in spring 2008, the total membership of the scheme was 1 113, including 478 active MEPs. It stresses that at 31 December 2007 the fund's assets were EUR 214 887 336. Moreover, it notes - in relation to the accounts of the ASBL managing the Members' voluntary pension fund - the independent auditor's statement that the assets of the ASBL were actuarially deficient by EUR 30 917 229 as at 31 December 2007 and note further the external auditor's statement that the final responsibility for the payment of benefits **rests with Parliament**. Parliament considers, however, that this interpretation does not accord fully with the original conception of the voluntary pension fund as a self-governing entity outside the structures of the institution. It therefore invites Parliament's Legal Service to give its views before the entry into force of the new statute on the question as to whether ultimate financial responsibility for the voluntary pension fund lies with the fund and its members or with Parliament. Noting the intention to negotiate a convention between Parliament and the fund, Parliament points out that **under no circumstances will Parliament provide extra money from the budget to cover the fund's deficit**, as it did in the past. It stresses that the Parliament commissioned an updated actuarial study examining the fund following the recent financial/banking crisis. It also notes that the Bureau decided not to comply with a recommendation by the European Ombudsman (complaint 655/2006/(SAB)ID) that Parliament should give access to the list of members of the voluntary pension scheme, notwithstanding a positive opinion of the European Data Protection Supervisor. Parliament therefore calls on the Bureau to reconsider its position and to publish the list.

Environment: lastly, Parliament recalls that, on 27 November 2007, the President and Secretary-General signed an agreement for an environmental certification of Parliament's buildings, and that Parliament now has EMAS (Environmental Management Scheme) certification for all three places of work. It stresses that the Bureau set a 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 as the first and main target for the environmental management system. It therefore calls on the Secretary-General to inform its competent committees to provide precise figures on CO_2 emissions reductions achieved.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Parliament

2008/2276(DEC) - 10/11/2008

PURPOSE: to present the report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2007 (other institutions – European Parliament).

CONTENT: in its annual report for the financial year 2007, the Court focuses on the legality and regularity of the operating expenditure of the institutions. In 2007, the Court notes that all the institutions operated satisfactorily the supervisory and control systems required by the Financial Regulation and the transactions tested were free from material error of legality and regularity.

However, the Court draws attention to a number of findings which should be taken into consideration by the institutions concerned. In the specific case of the audit of the **European Parliament**, the Court takes note of the following issues:

Payments on carried over appropriations: on 20 December 2006 the Parliament signed a contract concerning the supply of high definition broadcast cameras for the D5 building in Brussels. It was stated in the contract that the final payment of 30% of the total price had to be made after the receipt and installation of the equipment. A final payment of EUR 1 486 598, which included the abovementioned 30% (EUR 637 111) took place on 19 December 2007. Although the equipment had been received, the document reporting the final acceptance of the goods, dated 17 December 2007, stated that the on-site installation would not occur before June 2008. The final payment (30%) should not have been made, because it was not yet required by the contract, the corresponding amount of appropriations carried over from 2006 should have been cancelled and, for any payment due in 2008, appropriations from the 2008 budget should have been used.

The European Parliament states that the installation of material was not performed because the building was not available. It also states that the final payment was made taking account of the following points: i) checks on the operation of each camera were deemed equivalent to their installation; ii) the contractual guarantee for 2 years from the date of final reception was extended by 6 months; iii) the supplier undertook to install the equipment as soon as the building became available.

Consequently, the authorising officer considered these points to be sufficient to enable the final payment to be made using the appropriations carried over from 2006.

Follow-up to observations from past annual reports: the audit gave rise to remarks on actions and decisions taken as a follow-up to observations from past Annual Reports concerning the reimbursement of accommodation costs incurred on mission (2004 and 2005 Annual Reports) and the allowances for assistance to Members of the European Parliament (2006 Annual report). On this issue, the Court considers that the Parliament should further enhance controls over the parliamentary assistance allowance, including random checks of invoices that the MEPs have in their possession and further develop the regulatory framework applied for the parliamentary assistance allowance, in order to address its weaknesses.

As regards the additional pension scheme for Members of the European Parliament 2006 Annual Report), the Court states that there should be clear rules established in the scheme to define the liabilities and responsibilities of the European Parliament and of the members of the scheme in case of a deficit.