

Basic information

2008/2281(DEC)

DEC - Discharge procedure

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

Subject

8.70.03.07 Previous discharges

Procedure completed

Key players

European
Parliament

Committee responsible

CONT Budgetary Control

Rapporteur

SØNDERGAARD Søren Bo
(GUE/NGL)

Appointed

26/03/2008

Committee for opinion

AFET Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur for opinion

The committee decided not to give an opinion.

Appointed

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.

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|---|---|--|
| 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. | |

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 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 |
| 20/03/2009 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A6-0153/2009 | |
| 21/04/2009 | Debate in Parliament |  | |
| 23/04/2009 | Decision by Parliament | T6-0292/2009 | 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 | 2008/2281(DEC) |
| Procedure type | DEC - Discharge procedure |
| Legal basis | Rules of Procedure EP 102 |
| Stage reached in procedure | Procedure completed |
| Committee dossier | CONT/6/67235 |

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|-----------|--------------|------------|---------|
| Committee draft report | | PE416.561 | 28/01/2009 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE421.102 | 23/02/2009 | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | | A6-0153/2009 | 20/03/2009 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T6-0292/2009 | 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 2009/0638 OJ L 255 26.09.2009, p. 0085 | Summary |

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

2008/2281(DEC) - 23/04/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the CoR for the financial year 2007.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2009/638/EC of the European Parliament on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2007 (Section VII - Committee of the Regions).

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 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, Committee of the Regions

2008/2281(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 VII - Committee of the Regions.

CONTENT: this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the financial statement of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) for 2007. It presents an analysis of the institution's financial management as well as its main axes of expenditure.

The figures mentioned hereafter are taken from volume I of the [consolidated annual accounts of the European Communities](#) for the year 2007:

Commitment appropriations:

- commitment appropriations authorised: EUR 68 million;
- commitments made in 2007: EUR 66 million (implementation rate of 96.22%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: insignificant (0.13% of total commitments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 2 million (3.65% of the budget).

Payment appropriations:

- payment appropriations authorised: EUR 78 million;
- payments made in 2007: EUR 68 million (implementation rate of 86.89%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: EUR 6 million (8.02% of total payments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 4 million (5.09% of the budget).

Main axes of expenditure for 2007: in the context of its political activities and its mission (namely its involvement in the EU decision-making process and policy-orientation debates as a consultative organ), the CoR, in 2007, represented local and regional authorities within the European institutions. By means of its **consultative activities** (adoption of opinions) and **structured cooperation** with the European institutions and associations of local and regional authorities, the CoR fully implemented its work programme and overall political strategy.

The main event organised by the CoR in 2007 (along with the seminars organised by the CoR's Commissions and the Open Days) was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (22-23 March 2007).

In 2007, the CoR also:

- adopted 44 opinions, of which the most important concerned structural funds, EU reform and enlargement, sustainable development and mobility and better lawmaking;
- continued its efforts in its consultative role to support the creation of the Security, Justice and Freedom Area, at the Conference in Adeje in the Canary Islands (October 2007);
- improved its image with Open Days held from 8 to 11 October 2007 under the theme "Making it Happen" with some 5 500 policymakers as well as with the traditional inter-institutional "Portes ouvertes" exercise in May;
- improved its level of external information with the creation of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network (June 2007). This network aims to facilitate the exchange of information between local and regional authorities of the EU as regards the proposals of the European Commission which will have an impact on subsidiarity when adopted. Its main achievements included producing the report "Horizon 2010 - Local and Regional Authorities for Growth and Jobs";
- strengthened interinstitutional cooperation (particularly with the Council and Member States);
- held several meetings (ordinary and external) in Würzburg (Germany) and Vilamoura (Portugal);
- agreed to a new agreement on administrative cooperation with the EESC with a view to ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of these two institutions: the agreement concerns the Joint Services, mainly the production chain services from translation to printing, as well as IT /Telecommunications, Security and Catering services. Some services were integrated in the "own" services of each Committee, such as the library, socio-medical service, the pre-press and internal services. A new governance structure was also created, which contributes to the transparency of operations;
- completed the administrative reform of the institution;
- further developed control standards.

With regard to the implementation of the budget, the activity report notes that, on the whole, the implementation rate improved considerably. The rate of carry-over appropriations is now significantly lower than in previous years (the CoR had an implementation rate of 97% for payment appropriations in 2007, up from an implementation rate of 84% in 2006).

The other main points concerning the implementation of the CoR budget can be summarised as follows:

Title I (staff expenditure): this Title is characterised by a reduction in remuneration and allowances (due to lower than expected salaries indexation), lower recruitment costs, considerably lower costs related to the interinstitutional crèche (miscalculation of costs by the Commission led to significant unforeseen savings for the CoR) and a notable reduction in expenditure on publishing.

Title II (operating expenditure): this Title is characterised by the cancellation of certain appropriations carried over, particularly for the item entitled "annual lease payments" for the advance payments of the Trèves 74 and Belliard 93 buildings, as well as for "observer" costs for the activities of Romanian and Bulgarian observers - these countries entered the EU on 1 January 2007. This Title was also characterised by the non-implementation of appropriations carried over from 2006 for the items "expenditure on publishing and participation in public events" (mostly travel and accommodation costs for journalists), "general publications" and other "communication activities".

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

2008/2281(DEC) - 23/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 409 votes to 56, with 10 abstentions, a decision to grant the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007. The decision to grant discharge is also an approval of the closure of the accounts of this institution.

Moreover, the Parliament adopted by 438 votes to 33, with 6 abstentions, a resolution with observations which form an integral part of the decision to grant discharge. The resolution points out that in 2007 the CoR had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of EUR 68.6 million (compared to EUR 74.4 million in 2006), with a utilisation rate of 96.22%.

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

- Pending cases concerning the CoR: noting that the Court of Auditors' audit did not give rise to any significant observations as regards the CoR, the Parliament recalls that the internal audit on salary transfers (completed in 2006) revealed that "weaknesses existed concerning the principle of separation of functions in this area (initiating functions and internal verification) and the control environment should have been given greater priority in view of the risks concerned". It also recalls that, following an investigation, OLAF established with regard to eight transfers that they were not in compliance with statutory conditions and recommended recovering the amounts overpaid from the officials concerned. Noting with satisfaction that all recoveries were completed by early 2007, the Parliament further recalls that with regard to six staff members, OLAF recommended the opening of disciplinary proceedings (and for five of them it also submitted files to the Belgian authorities). Moreover, it notes that the procedure concerning those persons is ongoing. It calls on the CoR to consider proportionate disciplinary measures if the outcome of the pending cases requires them;
- **Administrative Cooperation Agreement with the EESC:** the Parliament welcomes the signature in December 2007 of a new Administrative Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic and Social Committee and the CoR for the period 2008 to 2014. It is convinced that cooperation between the two institutions will be financially advantageous to European taxpayers (in terms of infrastructure, IT and telecommunications and translation). It recalls, however, that a number of services will be de-coupled and insists that this decoupling should be budget neutral;
- **Internal controls:** the Parliament recalls that it is crucial that controls carried out by authorising officers, verifiers and auditors, are sufficiently rigorous. It notes with satisfaction the development by the CoR's budget service of a new budget analytical monitoring tool ("BudgetWatch"), providing comprehensive information on all CoR budget lines and sub-lines, including the available appropriations, as well as the establishment of a list of sensitive posts. It also requests the CoR to include in its following activity report (financial year 2008) a chapter giving a detailed account of the follow-up during the year to Parliament's earlier discharge decisions.

Furthermore, the Parliament reiterates its call for Members of the CoR to declare their financial interests.

Lastly, the Parliament regrets the fact that, despite amendments to the Financial Regulation, its rules on procurement are still excessively cumbersome for smaller institutions, such as the CoR. It therefore calls on the Commission to consult extensively with this institution in order to ensure that its concerns are fully taken into account in the final draft.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

2008/2281(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 – Committee of the Regions).

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. Nevertheless, in the specific case of the audit of the **Committee of the Regions**, the audit did not give rise to any significant observations.